

DANIEL – The Key to Revelation

Week 2 – Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream – “The Times of the Gentiles”

9/20/26 – PM

TEXT: Daniel 2:1-49

Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon upon the death of his father in 605 B.C., making the “second year” of his reign about 603 B.C. Daniel and his friends were carried captive in 606 B.C., and had completed their training for three years in the “National University of Babylon” (so to speak). This would account for why they were part of the “wise men” who were set to be destroyed by the king’s command (2:13, 18). For some reason, Daniel and his companions had not been informed of the king’s dilemma or demands upon his court of magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and the scientists / philosophers (Chaldeans).

Nebuchadnezzar had been chosen by God to be a Gentile world emperor (Jeremiah 27:4-8), and to receive this revelation.

I. The King’s Distress (Daniel 2:1-13)

- a. A dream that troubled his spirit and scared him awake
 - i. Magicians – practitioners of magic, superstitions and fortune tellers.
 - ii. Astrologers – pretended to foretell future events by the study of the stars.
 - iii. Sorcerers – pretended to hold communication with the dead, using potions, and claimed to possess supernatural power or knowledge, but especially through the aid of evil spirits.
 - iv. Chaldeans – sect of philosophers who made the sciences their special study. Daniel and his companions were assigned to this group in Babylon.
- b. Nebuchadnezzar couldn’t remember the dream, and demanded that they tell him WHAT he dreamed, and WHAT IT MEANT.

- i. These groups could not of course do that, and this exposed to the king the reality of their fraud and conspiracies. Most often, they would work with a little information and formulate some reasonable story or explanation. Without having even the basic details of the dream, they were helpless to give an answer. This caused the king to become furious and to order them to be killed.

II. Daniel's Plan (Daniel 2:14-23)

- a. Just as God used Joseph to interpret the dream of Pharaoh, he now uses Daniel to interpret the dream of Nebuchadnezzar.
 - i. Daniel and his friends were apparently not informed at first about what was happening, but God used that for His glory. Had Daniel been present at first, and knew the interpretation, the false prophets, magicians, and sorcerers would never have been exposed as frauds.
 - ii. Daniel slows things down and asks for a little time from the king. He promised that he could reproduce the dream, and give its meaning. The king agreed to give him a chance.
 - iii. Daniel and his friends have an "all-night prayer meeting" (vs. 17-18).
 - 1. Daniel is given the secret in a night vision. Notice the difference in "dream" and "vision". Dreams contain things that we are familiar with. Nebuchadnezzar was very aware of gigantic statues as found in Egypt when he conquered that land. God gave him a dream concerning a "terrible" image of a man made of several elements (Daniel 2:31-35). Daniel's vision was given in answer to his prayer. It was a conscious revelation from God. We aren't told exactly how, but the Bible says the secret was revealed to Daniel.

III. Daniel Tells the Dream (Daniel 2:24-35)

- a. After preaching to the king about the “God of Heaven” (vs.27-28), Daniel begins to explain the dream in great detail.
 - i. Great image (of a man standing) made of four kinds of metal
 - 1. Gold, silver, brass, iron
 - a. Decreasing in weight and value from head to foot
 - b. Increasing in strength from head to foot
 - i. Golden head – Babylon – absolute power / autocracy
 - ii. Silver breast and arms – (2 arms merge into one chest) – Medo-Persian Empire – 2 become one (Persia) – Limited by rule of law
 - iii. Brass thighs – (shortest portion of image) – Grecian – ruled by military generals
 - iv. Iron legs – (2 legs) – Roman Empire (East and West = 2)
 - v. Feet of iron and clay – mixture at the end
 - ii. The image symbolizes the “Times of the Gentiles”. From the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the time of the Antichrist, this image represents the great world empires in their unity (one image) and in historical succession. Others have tried to conquer the world since the Roman Empire (Napoleon, Hitler, etc.) but have never succeeded.

IV. Daniel Interprets the Dream (Daniel 2:36-49)

- a. Daniel references “the latter days” (vs. 28). This is an extended period of time that began with the birth of Christ, and embraces the remainder of earthly time concluding with the Great White Throne judgment in Revelation.
- b. Daniel explains that the image represents the empires of the world beginning with Babylon.
 - i. Babylon – head of gold – vs. 38 (606-538 B.C.)

1. Nebuchadnezzar personally controlled the “then known world” for 43 yrs. Upon his death, he was succeeded by his son and two others, then finally by Nabonidus and his son Belshazzar who ruled as co-regents. Belshazzar died at the hands of the Medes and Persians, (Daniel ch. 5), and thus ended the Babylonian Empire.
- ii. Medio-Persian – Chest and arms of silver – vs. 39 (538-330 B.C.)
1. This kingdom was inferior to Babylon, as seen in the fact that Nebuchadnezzar WAS the law (Daniel 3:29, 4:30). Darius was SUBJECT to the law (Daniel 6:7,8,12,15)
 2. The two arms represented the Medes (left), and the Persians (right). The right arm was stronger, overtaking the Medes in time and becoming just Persia.
 3. This empire was characterized by its kindness toward the Jews and the prophecy of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1, Nehemiah 2:1-8, Esther 8:1-2).
- iii. Grecian - The belly and thighs of brass – vs. 39 (330-63 B.C.)
1. This kingdom rose out of the Macedonian Kingdom of Philip II. His son, Alexander the Great, entered Asia Minor in 334 B.C. and by 330 B.C. had conquered Persia.
 2. Alexander had expanded his kingdom into the largest empire which ever existed to that time and was searching for more worlds to conquer, when he died and his generals took over.
- iv. Roman – the legs of iron – vs. 40 (63 B.C. – 476 A.D.)
1. This empire is not mentioned in the historic writings of the Old Testament, but it is in place at the beginning of the New Testament (Luke 2:1)
 2. Iron well pictures the unyielding power / strength of Rome. The legs of the image take up almost half its

length, showing that the Roman Empire was to last longer than any of the others.

3. The two legs of the image indicate the division of the Roman Empire into the West and the East, which took place in 364 A.D. when the emperor Constantine I moved his seat of power from Rome to Byzantium, calling it Constantinople (present day Istanbul).

v. Feet of iron and clay – vs. 41-43

1. Iron represents Roman imperialism – the rule of the Caesars.
2. Clay represents the “will of the people” – democracy
3. This “partly strong, partly broken” (vs. 42), and the “mixed” (vs. 43) pictures the final stage of Gentile power, where a shaky mixture of imperial and democratic forms of government exists.

vi. The ten toes (vs. 44)

1. These represent ten kings or kingdoms which will be in place at the return of Jesus Christ. These same 10 are seen in Revelation 17:12, and represent a revived form of the old Roman Empire.

vii. The stone cut without hands (vs. 45)

1. The stone represents the second coming of Christ. The fact that it is “cut without hands” signifies His supernatural being.
2. The “stone” destroys the feet of the image and breaks them in pieces.

viii. The great mountain (vs. 44)

1. In prophetic scripture, a mountain speaks of a kingdom (Isaiah 2:2, 11:9). This mountain speaks of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. (vs. 35)

***More information about these kingdoms is told in Daniel chapter 7.**

Study references and commentaries used in this lesson:

“The Book of Daniel” – Rev. Clarence Larkin, 1929, published by the Clarence Larkin Estate, Glenside, PA 19038

“Daniel the Prophet” – Robert J. Sargent, 1987, published by Bible Baptist Church Publications, Oak Harbor, WA 98277

