

# Daniel:

## God's Divine Ambassador

New Hope  
Baptist Church  
Winter Bible Study  
2010



# Final Days of Judah

- ❖ 605 B.C.: Nebuchadnezzar took over Judah
  - ❖ Took Daniel and other aristocratic youths to Babylon to serve his kingdom
  - ❖ Name changes:
    - ❖ Daniel: “My judge is God”
    - ❖ Belteshazzar: “Nebo protect his life”
    - ❖ Hananiah: “Yahweh has shown grace”
    - ❖ Shadrach: “The Command of Aku”
    - ❖ Mishael: “Who is what God is?”
    - ❖ Meshach: “Who is what Aku is?”
    - ❖ Azariah: “Yahweh has helped”
    - ❖ Abednego: “Servant of Nego [Nebo]”

# Neo-Babylonia



# Captivity and Training

- ❖ Daniel and friends would have already spoken Aramaic (2 Kings 18:26, Isaiah 36:11)
- ❖ Daniel understood the prophecies of Jeremiah; knew he would live at least 70 years in Babylon
- ❖ Daniel 1:5: “The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king”
- ❖ Youths would have learned Babylonian literature, culture, and history
- ❖ Objective: To assimilate the Jewish captives into Babylonian society and Nebuchadnezzar’s court

# Assimilate or Separate?

- ❖ Daniel 1:8: “But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king’s food, or with the wine that he drank”
- ❖ Food served in the palace didn’t meet the requirements of the Mosaic Law
  - ❖ In ancient times, most meat came from leftovers from sacrifices to pagan gods
- ❖ Daniel joined by his 3 friends
- ❖ Key: “God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs”
  - ❖ “Favor:” “Hesed:” Covenant faithfulness
  - ❖ “Compassion:” Refers to God’s mercy

# The Test

- ❖ Daniel 1:10: ““I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king”
  - ❖ Nebuchadnezzar saw Daniel and Friends frequently; took an interest in their welfare
  - ❖ Ashpenaz could have faced beheading if Nebuchadnezzar were displeased!
- ❖ The Test: “Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink”
  - ❖ 10 days would determine whether they would succumb to Babylon

# The Test

- ❖ Daniel 1:15: “At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king’s food”
  - ❖ God honored Daniel’s faithfulness
- ❖ 1:17: “God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams”
- ❖ Dan. 1:19: “And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.... He found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom”

# Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- ❖ Chapter 2: Nebuchadnezzar's dream was more of a contest between the gods of Babylon and the LORD than between the wise men and Daniel
- ❖ Key words: "The word from me is firm"
  - ❖ KJV sounds as if Nebuchadnezzar forgot the dream; he remembered it, but he needed to test his advisors
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar knew these people were sycophants, and he was getting ready to clean house



# Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- ❖ Who did Nebuchadnezzar call?
- ❖ “Magicians:” Hebrew, possibly astrologers
- ❖ “Enchanters:” “spoke” to departed spirits
  - ❖ Hebrew word in Mishnah means “speak from the armpit”
- ❖ “Sorcerers:” referred to pharmacies; potions, herbs, hallucinogenics
- ❖ Chaldeans: learned class, skilled in interpreting knowledge
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# Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar's test: "Wise Men" would have the ability to determine the dream
  - ❖ Major issue for Nebuchadnezzar: He knew this dream was important; he needed the truth!
- ❖ Punishment if the wise men failed: "torn limb from limb, and your houses laid in ruins"
- ❖ Final answer: "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

# Daniel's Crisis

- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar's rage: Kill'em all!
- ❖ Daniel's intercession
  - ❖ Learned of the situation from Arioch, captain of the guard
  - ❖ Apparently, Daniel and his friends weren't in the first group of advisors
- ❖ Daniel's response: Visited Nebuchadnezzar, asked for time to pray
  - ❖ Nebuchadnezzar agreed (perhaps over his tantrum)

# Daniel's Prayer

- ❖ Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah prayed through the night
- ❖ 2:19: “Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven”
  - ❖ Daniel's prayer of blessing:
    - ❖ “Blessed be the name of God”
    - ❖ “He removes kings and sets up kings”
    - ❖ “He reveals deep and hidden things”

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- ❖ Chapter 2: Another test: Nebuchadnezzar's dream
  - ❖ God communicated with Gentile kings by dreams to force them to depend on Hebrews for interpretation; brought Hebrews into places of power
  - ❖ Gentile dreams were in pictures; no words; Hebrew dreams to have words
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# Daniel & Nebuchadnezzar

- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar: *Really?*
- ❖ Daniel: “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries...”
  - ❖ Daniel credited his God with revealing the mystery; refused to take credit for himself

# The Dream of the Future

- ❖ The dream: Kingdoms and the Rock
  - ❖ Head of gold
  - ❖ Chest and arms of silver
  - ❖ Middle and thighs of bronze
  - ❖ Legs of iron
  - ❖ Feet partly of iron and partly of clay
  - ❖ “A stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces”

# The Dream of the Future

- ❖ The dream: Kingdoms and the Rock
  - ❖ Head of gold: Babylon; represented ideal kingdom
    - ❖ absolute ruler
  - ❖ Chest and arms of silver: Persia; not the ideal, but longer lasting
  - ❖ Middle and thighs of bronze: Greeks, beginning with Alexander the Great
  - ❖ Legs of iron: Roman Republic; never lost a major war
  - ❖ Feet partly of iron and partly of clay: Roman Empire; militarily strong, politically and economically weak

# The Dream of the Future

- ❖ The dream: Kingdoms and the Rock
  - ❖ The Rock: Not made with hands
    - ❖ Babylonians saw the earth as a huge mountain called “mountain-House”
  - ❖ Rock typifies Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4)
  - ❖ “And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever...”
- ❖ Key point: “The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure”

# Nebuchadnezzar's Response

- ❖ “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery”
  - ❖ Nebuchadnezzar was named after the messenger of chief Babylonian god Marduk (Nebo); recognized Daniel as messenger of his God
- ❖ Dan. 2:48: “Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon”
  - ❖ Daniel received a governorship usually reserved for Babylonians only

# Lessons

- ❖ God reveals His will to His people
  - ❖ Visions? Perhaps
  - ❖ Scripture? Definitely!
  - ❖ Holy Spirit? Absolutely!
  - ❖ The Church? Unquestionably!
- ❖ God controls the affairs of nations
  - ❖ This vision accurately predicted the empires of the West for *at least* the next 1,100 years