

Daniel:

God's Divine
Ambassador

New Hope
Baptist Church
Winter Bible Study
2010



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”

Why a Golden Statue?

- ❖ Chapter 3: Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Statue
- ❖ Why a golden statue?
 - ❖ Apparently, Nebuchadnezzar heard “Gold” and “You” and didn't pay much attention to the rest to the rest of the interpretation
 - ❖ Nebuchadnezzar decided to enforce state religion of Nebo
- ❖ What about Nebuchadnezzar's admission to Daniel?
 - ❖ Admission that the Hebrew God was “a” god only
- ❖ Dimensions: 90' high, 9' wide
 - ❖ Most likely, image was covered with gold

The Golden Statue

- ❖ Names of government officials covered all ranks of the empire
- ❖ Five of the terms for officials are Persian words; this chapter was probably written after the Persian conquest in 539 B.C.
- ❖ Terms used for some of the instruments are Greek words

The Golden Statue

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- ❖ Terms used for some of the instruments are Greek words
- ❖ Commandment of Nebuchadnezzar: “When you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up”

Jewish Reaction

- ❖ Crowd included Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
- ❖ Question: Where was Daniel?
 - ❖ Possibly away on government business; he certainly wouldn't have bowed to the statue
- ❖ Music rang, crowd bowed; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stayed upright

Chaldeans See a Chance

- ❖ Chaldeans informed on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
 - ❖ Probably in reaction to their demotion over the dream
- ❖ “These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up”

Nebuchadnezzar's Temper

- ❖ First tantrum: Nebuchadnezzar nearly executed all his wise men
- ❖ Second tantrum: Nebuchadnezzar arrested Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
- ❖ Third tantrum: Nebuchadnezzar ordered the furnace heated so hot it killed the soldiers performing the execution

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Would the Jews Bow?

- ❖ Why did Nebuchadnezzar give Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego a second chance?
- ❖ Their answer: “ If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up”
- ❖ To the furnace!
 - ❖ Probably the furnace used to melt the gold for the statue

God Delivers!

- ❖ Soldiers died throwing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walk around!
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar: ““But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods”
 - ❖ “Gods” is plural
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar now recognized the power of God
- ❖ “There is no other god who is able to rescue in this way”

Nebuchadnezzar's Last Dream

- ❖ Chapter 4
- ❖ Daniel recorded Nebuchadnezzar's account
- ❖ “It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation”
 - ❖ Decree expressed Nebuchadnezzar's admission of God's greatness and sovereignty

Nebuchadnezzar's Last Dream

- ❖ Another dream, another call for the wise men, another interpretation from Daniel
 - ❖ The tree: Nebuchadnezzar
 - ❖ Wealth of the tree represented the wealth of Babylonia
 - ❖ Heavenly watcher declared the tree cut down, but with a band wrapped around it
- ❖ Daniel was deeply disturbed over the dream
 - ❖ Nebuchadnezzar had treated Daniel well, and was an excellent monarch for a pagan

Daniel's Interpretation

- ❖ The tree would be cut down and left to the “dew of heaven”
- ❖ “You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will”
 - ❖ Nebuchadnezzar would lose his kingdom for a time, but his rule would be preserved
- ❖ Daniel's advice: “Break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity”

Nebuchadnezzar's Illness

- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar may have tried to reform for a time, but his pride got the best of him
- ❖ “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?”
- ❖ “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will”

Nebuchadnezzar's Illness

- ❖ What did Nebuchadnezzar endure?
- ❖ Boanthropy: "a psychological disorder in which a human being believes himself to be a Bovine" (source: Wikipedia.org)
- ❖ R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1946): gave an account of boanthropy he personally observed
- ❖ Victim ate grass (no weeds), drank water from a clean container, wore no overcoat
- ❖ Physical effects: "Lengthening of the hair and a coarse, thickened condition of the finger-nails"

Nebuchadnezzar's Confession

- ❖ Seven years later: “At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation”
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar regained his senses and returned to his throne
- ❖ “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble”

Nebuchadnezzar's Confession

- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar's progression in faith:
 - ❖ Ch. 2: "your God"
 - ❖ Ch. 3: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego;" then decreed that no one should speak ill of the Hebrew God
 - ❖ Ch. 4: "I blessed the Most High.... Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble"

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