

LESSON 4 (For 2 periods)

The dream of Nebuchadnezzar

Objective: To learn that all the world empires will come to an end and Messiah will establish His eternal kingdom and to prepare ourselves for that kingdom in holiness.

Bible reference: Daniel Ch.2

Memory verses: [Daniel 2:44.45 \(NKJV\)](#)

And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be

destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

Introduction

When we study history, we can see that world powers are not stable. Kings have lost their crowns. Big powerful empires have fallen. Democracies have crumbled leading to military rules. Political leaders live in constant fear of losing their power any time. Such situations have been predicted in the Word of God. The topic in the second chapter of Daniel is the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty emperor of Babylon and its interpretation. The future history of the nations is predicted here. After the fall of all the world powers, Messiah will establish His eternal kingdom.

The dream

Nebuchadnezzar conquered all middle east countries and became a mighty emperor. Two years after he began his rule, he saw a dream. The dream was given by God to tell him about God’s plan for the future of the world. God wished to remind the king that he need not boast about his kingdom of Babylon because it is God who is in control and He raises and removes powers of the world. Finally, Messiah will establish His eternal kingdom on earth.

Nebuchadnezzar saw a huge image standing before him in a dream. Its head was made of gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron and its feet were made partly of iron and partly of clay. As the king was watching, a stone cut out without hands flew down and struck the feet and broke the image into pieces. All the material of gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay were crushed like chaff and was carried away by wind. The stone which struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:31-35).

The distress of the king

The king was greatly distressed. He lost his sleep and forgot the dream. All the wise men and magicians of the land were called to the palace and commanded to tell him both the dream and its

meaning (Dan. 2:2). They told the king that no human being can tell the meaning without knowing the dream. The furious king issued orders to kill them and destroy their houses.

The mystery revealed to Daniel

When Daniel heard the news, he enquired with Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, the reason for the king's decree. Then Daniel went to the king and requested him to give some time so that he will be able to tell the king both the dream and its meaning. That night, Daniel along with his three friends knelt before God and prayed for the revelation of the dream and its meaning. The whole mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. The words of praises that Daniel offered to God are worth noting. He mentions seven things: "Blessed be the name of God for ever. Wisdom and might are His. He changes the times and the seasons. He removes and raises up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals secret things. Light dwells with Him" (Dan. 2:20-22). Daniel went to Arioch and told him not to kill the wise men of the land because he can tell the dream and its meaning to the king.

Arioch took Daniel to the king. When Nebuchadnezzar asked him whether he can tell him his dream and its meaning, the reply that Daniel gave is worth our attention: Read Dan. 2:27-30. Daniel gives all honor and glory to God and does not take any credit to himself. We can also find solutions to our problems through prayer. Let us give all honor to God.

Interpretation of the dream

The greatness and splendor of the image depict the power and character of world powers. They appear very powerful and prosperous. But in reality, they are lifeless and weak as the image. They have no strength or stability because they are standing on such a weak and dangerous mixture of iron and clay. The whole structure is made up of different materials which cannot be joined together. All the materials are taken from the earth. The nations may appear strong and bright, they are still of the earth and without any unity. The statue which begins at the top with gold and ends in feet of clay is a good picture of the world powers which appear great in the beginning but are destined to end in pieces.

Daniel explains the meaning of the four parts of the image. They represent four world powers or governments beginning with Babylon. (More details about these four powers are revealed in chapter 7).

1. Golden head:

The head represents the first world power, Babylon, that came into being after the fall of Israel. Its glory lasted 70 years from B.C. 606 – 536. Babylonian empire occupies the first place among the gentile nations. The attractive and precious gold points to the prosperity and splendor of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar ruled Babylon as a powerful autocrat for 44 years till B.C. 562. He spent 7 years in the wilderness with wild animals as a punishment from God for his pride (Dan. 4:30-33). His successors were weak and led lives of pleasure. Belshazzar was killed in the midst of a boisterous and drunken gathering in his palace in B.C. 536 by Medo-Persian kings who took control of the land (Dan 5:30-31).

List of Babylonian kings is given below:

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| 1. Nebopolazzer: | B.C. 625-606 |
| 2. Nebuchadnezzar: | 606-562 |
| 3. Evil Merodach | 562-560 |
| 4. Neriglizzar | 560-556 |
| 5. Lebishimarduch | 556 (9 months) |
| 6. Nabonidus | 556-536 |
| 7. Belshazzar | 536 |

(Note: Babylon is depicted as a lion with eagle's wings in ch.7)

2. Chest and arms of silver

This part of the image points to the Medo-Persian empire which became powerful after the Babylonian empire (Dan. 2:32). The empire lasted more than 200 years from B.C. 536 till 330. As silver is inferior to gold, Medo-Persian kings had less prosperity and splendor than Babylonians but lasted longer and controlled more areas. The picture of two hands depicts the joint authority of Medes and Persia. Gold is the symbol of kings and silver is the symbol of princes. Princes occupied positions of power in the Medo-Persian empire (Dan. 6:4,6,14,15). When they conquered Babylon in B.C. 536, Cyrus was the Persian king and his father-in-law, Darius was the Median king. As

