

# LESSONS FROM DANIEL: A MAN OF GREAT COURAGE [2]

**INTRODUCTION:** God gave Daniel "*understanding in all visions and dreams*". (Dan. 1:17) Daniel made good use of this special ability. In this lesson, we shall study two interesting dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and their interpretation by Daniel. These dreams reveal the greatness of God. Through these dreams, God revealed future events which proves Him to be the One True God. (Isa. 46:9-11)

## I. NEBUCHADNEZZAR DREAMED ABOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S EVERLASTING KINGDOM (Daniel 2)

- A. The king was troubled with bad dreams (vs. 1)
  - 1. Wealth and power cannot insure peace of mind which is essential to happiness
  - 2. Being able to sleep well at night is a blessing (Eccl. 5:12; Prov. 3:24)
- B. The king's reaction to the failure of his wise men to tell him his dream was harsh (vs. 2-9)
  - 1. The wise men could have made up an interpretation for the king's dream, but it was humanly impossible for them to tell the king what he had dreamed (vs. 10,11; I Cor. 2:11)
  - 2. They didn't have the supernatural power they claimed to have had
  - 3. Daniel and his friends were among those to be killed (vs. 12,13)
  - 4. Daniel was unaware of what was happening (vs. 14-16)
- C. Daniel sought, and received, God's help (vs. 17-19)
  - 1. What a wonderful example for us to follow (Mt. 7:7,8; Jam. 1:5)
  - 2. Daniel was grateful and praised God for His help (vs. 20-23)
  - 3. How often do we thank God for His help?
- D. Daniel was brought before the king and he made it clear that "*God in heaven*" was to receive the glory for making known the dream and its interpretation (vs.24-30)
  - 1. We should not boast about our accomplishments (Prov. 27:1,2)
  - 2. Like Daniel, we should give God the glory (I Cor. 1:31; 4:7)
- E. Daniel told the dream and the interpretation of it (vs. 31-45)
  - 1. The word "*terrible*" in verse 31 is translated "*awesome*" in the NKJV
  - 2. Head of gold – Babylonian Empire (vs. 36-38)
  - 3. Breast and arms of silver – Medo Persian Empire
  - 4. Belly and thighs of brass – Macedonian Empire; "...under Alexander, the universal empire, and spread Greek culture, civilization, and speech everywhere, and so prepared the way for the coming of the Lord...Brass armour marked the Greeks; their soldiers were the 'brazen-coated.'" (*The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 13, p. 84*)
  - 5. Legs of iron and feet part iron and clay – Roman Empire; "*strong as iron*" (vs. 40) (Mt. 24:15)
  - 6. "*And in the days of those kings...*" (vs. 44)
    - a. It was during the days of the Roman Empire that the church, or kingdom, was established (Luke 2:1; 3:1; Mark 1:15; Acts 2)
    - b. The "*stone was cut out without hands...became a great mountain and filled the whole earth*" (vs. 34,35)
    - c. "*Without hands*" means that the kingdom of God is not of human origin, has no military armies, no geographical boundaries, and will last forever (Jn. 18:36; Heb. 12:28; Rom. 14:17)
    - d. "*Filled the whole earth*" – gospel preached to every creature (vs. 35; Mt. 13:31,32;

Col. 1:23; Isa. 2:2)

- e. *"Nor shall the sovereignty thereof..."* – Jesus is the only King (Lk. 1:30-33)
- f. *"...but it shall break in pieces and consume all these nations"* (vs. 44) ("But the key thought in the noted passage is that the kingdom that God was to set up would destroy these kingdoms, which means it would bring about the end of world-wide empires such as the four represented by the giant man. Neither does it mean that the church would destroy such empires by direct and arbitrary attack on the very existence of such governments but it was to accomplish that end through the principles of individual responsibility, and the inherent right of all human beings to have a part in their own government, that were to be taught by this kingdom of God and Christ. In proportion as men received this teaching thus offered to them through the kingdom which the God of heaven set up, they were to see that world-powers with their stifling of individual rights were improper and they would rebel against them, which would result in their overthrow.")  
(*Bible Commentary, Vol. IV, by E.M. Zerr, p. 227*)

F. The fulfillment of this dream is proof that the Bible is inspired of God!

## II. NEBUCHADNEZZAR DREAMED ABOUT AN HUMBLING EXPERIENCE THAT CAME TO PASS (Daniel 4)

- A. Nebuchadnezzar, himself, told what God did to him and he told it for the purpose of exalting the *"Most High God"* (vs. 1-3)
  - 1. It is good to tell others of personal experiences that exalt the Lord
  - 2. How often have you told others what God has done for you?
- B. His wise men could not interpret his dream (vs. 4-7)
  - 1. He expressed confidence in Daniel's ability to interpret his dreams (vs. 8,9)
  - 2. He told his dream to Daniel (vs. 10-18)
- C. God caused him to have this dream so he *"may know that the Most High ruleth..."* (vs. 17)
  - 1. God still rules over the kingdoms of men
  - 2. "We may not know what the future holds in store for us, but we know Him who holds the future!"
- D. Daniel gave the interpretation of the king's dream (vs. 19-27)
- E. Whatever God says will happen – happens just like He said it would (II Pet. 3:9-13)
- F. Nebuchadnezzar was a proud, arrogant, selfish tyrant who needed to learn that he was a frail human being! (vs. 29,30; Prov. 6:16-19; 16:18)
  - 1. He actually lived like an animal (vs. 31-33)
  - 2. He went insane (vs. 34)
- G. When he realized that Jehovah was all-powerful and He did whatsoever He willed in heaven and earth, he [Nebuchadnezzar] had learned a very valuable lesson! (vs. 34-35)
  - 1. *"No one can restrain His hand"* (vs. 35 NKJV)
  - 2. *"What have You done?"* God does not answer to anyone!
- H. *"...those that walk in pride he is able to abase."* (vs. 37; Mt. 23:12)
  - 1. This was said, from personal experience, by the most powerful man on earth
  - 2. Instead of people looking down on him, *"greatness was added"* to him (vs. 36)
- I. God had to humble Nebuchadnezzar to cause him to see who it was that made him great!
- J. Do you see that God is responsible for all the good qualities that you possess and all the good deeds you have done? (I Cor. 15:10; Jam. 1:17)

**CONCLUSION:** I hope we realize, to some extent, how great God is and how dependent we are upon Him. (Acts 17:58) How foolish we are if we think we can defy, or ignore, God and go unpunished! The Lord will walk with the humble, but He will surely cast down the proud. (Micah 6:8; James 4:6,10) Let us humbly look to Him for guidance and instruction in all things. Have you obeyed His terms of pardon for sin? Will you become a citizen in the everlasting kingdom of God?

~ Don Hastings ~