

## LESSON THREE

# NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAMS

TEXT: Daniel Chapters Two and Four.

### A. INTRODUCTION:

In Daniel chapter two is found what some Bible students call the ABC of Prophecy, just as the book of Revelation may be called the XYZ of Prophecy. In this chapter God revealed an outline of history from Daniel's day until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to establish His Millennial Kingdom. There is no need to continue further with a study of prophecy unless first of all this chapter is fully understood.

In chapter four there is a key verse, which expresses the theme of God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar: "... *The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will*" (Daniel 4:32).

It must be remembered that God is still dealing with nations, both Gentile nations and Israel. To attempt to spiritualize Israel is doing violence to the Word of God.

### B. THE INTERPRETATION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM:

In response to an unexpressed desire on the part of Nebuchadnezzar to know the future of his great empire, God gave him a dream. Nebuchadnezzar received a revelation of the rise, progress and fall of Gentile world power during the period described by Christ as "*the times of the Gentiles*" (Luke 21:24). When Nebuchadnezzar awakened, he had forgotten the dream but he had not forgotten the effects of the dream. It was so disturbing that he was determined that the dream would be recalled and interpreted.

He called for the wise men and they offered to tell him the meaning if he would tell them the dream. However, the king accused them of preparing lying and corrupt words. He said that if they could not tell him the dream they also would be unable to interpret it. When they were unable to do so, the king was angry and commanded them to be destroyed. This would also include Daniel although up to this moment he was ignorant of the problem.

Daniel enquired of the captain, Arioch, concerning the problem. When Daniel was informed, he confidentially went to the king and requested more time. He assured the king that he would be able to reveal the dream with its meaning. He called for his three friends and they went before God in prayer. Daniel knew the "POWER OF UNITED PRAYER." In the night God gave Daniel a vision and showed him the dream and its meaning. Daniel was able to tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream.

Nebuchadnezzar had seen a great image with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, its feet part iron and part clay. Then Nebuchadnezzar had seen a stone cut out of a mountain without hands which smote the image on its feet. The stone broke the image into fine dust, which was carried away by the wind. Then the stone became a great mountain, which filled the entire earth.

Daniel said that each metal represented a different Gentile Kingdom. The kingdoms would begin with Babylon and end at Armageddon when Christ would return to set up His Kingdom. Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, *"Thou art this head of gold"* (Daniel 2:38).

It should be noted that each metal would become of less value but stronger, until we come to the feet which would be the weakest of all for the iron and the clay would not cleave to one another. The ten toes represent ten kings which will reign one hour with the beast (Revelation 17:12).

### C. THE DREAM DEALT WITH THE FUTURE:

Bible critics have tried to prove that this book was written long after much of it was fulfilled because of its accuracy. However, let us note these terms: *"In the latter days"* (verse 28); *"Come to pass hereafter"* (verse 29); and *"What shall come to pass"* (verse 29). Nebuchadnezzar was thinking about the future and God gave him the dream to reveal the future. The dream and interpretation was entirely prophetic.

Today much of it has been literally fulfilled in detailed accuracy. However, the closing events of the dream have never taken place. The stone has never smitten the image on its feet nor have we seen God's Kingdom set up upon the earth. We are living down in the time of the feet and soon this world will witness the final happenings foretold in this dream.

### D. THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES:

The "times of the Gentiles" is the period of time beginning with the captivity of Judah and ending with the Coming of Jesus. This revelation was made right at the beginning of the Gentile age in order to assure the faithful that God had not forgotten His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. In due time the Lord would terminate this period of Gentile domination, and restore the glorious kingdom that He had promised.

Let us note that this term was used by our Lord (Luke 21:24) and refers to Gentile dominion and rule. This term must never be confused with the term "fullness of the Gentiles" which refers to the church. *"... That blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in"* (Romans 11:25).

In this dispensation God is visiting the Gentiles to take a Gentile bride which is the church. This is the "fullness of the Gentiles." *"... God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name"* (Acts 15:14).

### E. GENTILE KINGDOMS:

Man has tried to set up kingdoms without God's King throughout history. This actually began under Nimrod (Genesis 10 & 11) who built the first Babylon. In Nebuchadnezzar's dream the succession of world empires is set forth under the figure of a gigantic image composed of various metals. In the diminishing value of the metals may be seen the deterioration of world empires in relation to their character of government.

The following is the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream:

1. Head of God:	Babylon	606 - 538 BC
2. Breast and arms of silver:	Medio-Persia	538 - 330 BC
3. Belly and thighs of brass:	Greece	330 - 146 BC
4. Iron:	Rome	146 BC to AD 408

Let us note the following:

1. Alexander died in 323 BC in his 33rd year. Afterwards the empire was divided among his four generals.
2. The two legs of the image represented the Roman Empire divided into two parts (Eastern and Western). The ten toes represent the ten kings of the end times prior to Armageddon.
3. The stone cut out without hands is Jesus Christ who will set up His Kingdom.

#### **F. THE FUTURE GENTILE KINGDOMS:**

These are pictured and revealed by the two feet and the ten toes. The two feet reveal that there will be a division of east and west. The clay and the iron represent two ideologies. The ten toes represent ten nations that will combine to establish the final kingdom out of which Antichrist will arise. It is not certain just what political and religious ideologies are represented. Undoubtedly the iron will still represent Rome and there is a strong possibility that the clay will be socialistic democracy. It could be communism.

#### **G. THE STONE CUT OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN:**

The "SMITTEN STONE" of Calvary becomes the "SMITING STONE" of Armageddon. Let us note the following Scriptures: *"I will tread them in my fury" (Isaiah 63); "Taking vengeance on them who know not God" (II Thessalonians 1:7-8); and "Fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Revelation 19:15).* There can be no universal peace until the Prince of Peace comes.

#### **H. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SECOND DREAM:**

In chapter four we read of Nebuchadnezzar's second dream. He saw a great tree that reached into heaven. The fowls dwelt in its branches and the beasts of the field were sheltered in its shade. He then saw a holy one come down and cried, "Hew down the tree." However, the stump was to be left bound with a band of iron and brass. He was to have the heart of a beast until seven times pass over him. When the wise men were unable to interpret the dream he called for Daniel.

Daniel was silent for an hour for he hesitated telling the king the meaning for it was a message of judgment. Nebuchadnezzar was the great tree that reached to heaven and the sight was to the end of the earth. Judgment was to fall upon Nebuchadnezzar for a period of seven years. During this time he would lose his sanity and become wild as a beast. After the seven years he would pray and repent and his reason would return to him. Then his kingdom would be restored. The stump in the ground would show that the kingdom would not be completely destroyed during this period of insanity.

#### **I. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S CONVERSION:**

In this fourth chapter of the prophecy there is the testimony of a pagan, heathen, Gentile king, relating for us his conversion and how he came to the knowledge of the true God.

Let us study carefully the steps in Nebuchadnezzar's conversion:

1. He recognized God. *"Your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings" (Daniel 2:47).*
2. He acknowledges that there is no other like God. *"... No other God that can deliver after this sort" (Daniel 3:29).*
3. He gives his testimony (Daniel 4:2-3).
4. He calls Him, *"my God" (Daniel 4:8).*
5. He was admonished to break off his sins by righteousness (Daniel 4:27).
6. He was lifted up with pride (Daniel 4:30). Note that after twelve months he had completely forgotten his vision and the interpretation.
7. He was humbled for seven years. He lost his sanity and became as a beast.

8. He lifted up his eyes to heaven (Daniel 4:34).

**J. PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION:**

Nebuchadnezzar's tree represented the Gentile kingdoms. The vision revealed the following regarding the future:

1. Man will reach a peak of pride and arrogance where God is completely ruled out.
2. Following the rapture of the church there will be seven years of madness and insanity. All restraints will be lifted and it will be a time of lawlessness, which will have no parallel.
3. The stump shows that the Gentiles will not be completely destroyed during this period.
4. Nebuchadnezzar's repentance and faith show that the Gentiles can be saved during the Millennium.

NOTE: The summary of this is found in Acts 15:14. At the present time God is visiting the Gentiles, but when His Kingdom is set up the Gentiles who are left will be converted through the means of judgment.

## LESSON THREE

### SELF HELP TEST

*State whether the following is TRUE or FALSE:*

1. Nebuchadnezzar's dream outlines the future history of Israel. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The wise men were not able to interpret the dream. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Nebuchadnezzar's image had a silver head. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Nebuchadnezzar's image had bronze thighs. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Nebuchadnezzar's image had iron legs. \_\_\_\_\_
6. The ten toes of the image represented ten kings. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Nebuchadnezzar's dream dealt with the past. \_\_\_\_\_
8. The "times of the Gentiles" is the church age. \_\_\_\_\_
9. The stone cut out without hands represents Nebuchadnezzar. \_\_\_\_\_
10. In Nebuchadnezzar's second dream, the tree represented himself. \_\_\_\_\_