

THE TRUTH

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Lesson 2 - The Truth About a King's Dream

God has conveyed important messages to people in a variety of ways. In Bible times, he occasionally used dreams. But these were not everyday vague, illogical dreams. Dreams from God were vivid, coherent and they had a definite message.

1. What are some of the ways that dreams have been used in the Scriptures?

- Dreams have been used to warn God's people of _____
[Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23]
- Dreams have been used to warn God's people of _____
[Genesis 41:1-57; 42:1-8; 50:20]
- Dreams have been used by God to convey _____.

2. According the Bible, why do dreams occur? [Ecclesiastes 5:3] Ans. Through _____ activities

Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of the Babylonian Empire, was one of the greatest of ancient kings. During his reign, he extended the boundaries of Babylon to include much of the territory we know today as the Middle East and Egypt. In the course of his conquests, many smaller countries fell. Members of the royal families of these subdued nations were made captives at the Babylonian court.

SCENE 1

Thus we find Daniel and his friends, princes from Palestine, land of the Hebrews, captive in Babylon at the time when God gave King Nebuchadnezzar the remarkable dream recorded here. Because of Daniel's faithfulness, God used him to interpret the dream. Let us turn now to the details of the prophecy. One night, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that greatly disturbed him. But the next morning he could neither remember it nor understand what it meant. So he ordered all his astrologers and soothsayers to tell him the dream and its meaning. But, of course, they could not do this. No one, of course, could tell the King what it was that he had dreamed. Enraged, Nebuchadnezzar ordered all the wise men in the palace to be slain, including Daniel and his three Hebrew friends. [See Daniel 2]

3. Who could not interpret the King's dream? [Daniel 2:27] The _____, _____ and _____.

4. Whom then, does God reveal His secrets to? [Amos 3:7; Numbers. 12:6] Ans. His _____, the _____

NOTE: God has the ability to look into the future and foretell what is going to take place centuries before the events come to pass. He revealed the mysteries of the future to the Bible prophets.

SCENE 2 [Daniel 2:12-13]

Upon learning about the crisis, they asked for time to pray about it. That night, in vision, Daniel was shown both the King's dream and its meaning. The next morning, the four young men knelt and thanked God for revealing the matter to Daniel. [See vs. 18-23]

SCENE 3 [Daniel 2:18-23]

As a result of this incident, Daniel was given one of the highest positions in the empire, and his three friends were also placed in leading offices.

THE DREAM AND ITS MEANING

5. As Daniel begins to interpret the King's dream, what precious metals did he list? [Dan. 2:31-35]

- HEAD of pure: _____
- BREAST and ARMS of pure: _____
- BELLY and THIGHS of pure: _____ / _____
- FEET: Part _____, and part _____
- LEGS of pure: _____

NOTE: This great image of a man, made of metal and clay with the great stone striking the feet, represented the rise and fall of empires from Nebuchadnezzar's day to ours.

IDENTIFYING THE KINGDOMS

6. Whom does the Bible identify as the head of gold? What kingdom does this head of gold represent? [Daniel 2:38] Ans _____

NOTE: Babylon was the first of what history knows as the four great monarchies. Its glorious capital was laid out in a perfect square, 15 miles on each side; a total of sixty miles around its walls, which was said to have been over 300 feet high and wide enough on top for five chariots to race abreast.

Through the city flowed the river Euphrates, flanked by great inner walls and giant brass gates. The streets of the city were broad and straight, crossing at right angles. The famous hanging gardens were here, rising terrace upon terrace, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. By contact with the Hebrew nation, Babylon had opportunity to become familiar with the Word of God and His will as revealed in it. Then as now, God was "not willing that any should perish," but that all should have eternal life. Jeremiah says, "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed." [Jeremiah 51:9]

As a nation, Babylon turned away from God because of _____. [See Daniel 4:30]

7. What kingdom would arise next? What nation conquered Babylon? [Daniel 2:39] Ans. _____

NOTE: Silver was a fitting symbol of Persia; for it was used by the Persians as a medium of exchange and in decorations, even more than the gold of the Babylonians. [See Cambridge Ancient History on Persia]

Through the prophet Isaiah, God had predicted exactly how the city of Babylon would be captured, and the name of the man who would conquer it—nearly 200 years before it happened! About the year 712 B.C., God declared in **Isaiah 45:1-3** that the “gates of brass” in the river, which passed through the middle of the city, would be left open for the armies of a man named “Cyrus” to enter and take the city. The story of the conquest is told in the fifth chapter of Daniel. This occurred about 65 years after the dream of Daniel 2. Persia, like Babylon, turned aside from the worship of the true God and became _____ in its nature and trampled on the _____ of God’s people. [See Daniel 6]

8. Which kingdom would overthrow the Medes and Persians? [Daniel 2:39; 8:20; 21] Ans.

The Greeks were experts in the molding of bronze. The soldiers wore breast plates of bronze, helmets of bronze, and carried shields of bronze. They carried bronze swords. [Anderson, UDP, 49]

NOTE: The brazen armor and brass breastplates worn by the Grecian soldiers are reflected in the brass thighs of the image. In 331 B.C. Medo-Persia was conquered by _____ at the Battle of Arbela. After conquering Greece, Alexander had headed eastward and rather quickly became ruler of the entire Near East. His army did not stop until it had subjugated most of India. Known as the Grecian Empire, this was the “kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.” [Daniel 2:39, also 32]

The rapidity with which Alexander, with his trained Greek phalanxes, made conquest after conquest was amazing. After only eight years (334-330 B.C.) he annexed an area a little less than 2 million square miles, containing a population of more than 20 million persons.

Returning from India, Alexander stopped in the ruins of Babylon and planned to rebuild the city (which God had predicted would never be rebuilt.) But then he suddenly died. During a drunken orgy which lasted several days.

Alexander contracted a violent fever and died eleven days later from this, on June 13, 323 B.C., at the age of 33. Immediately, his generals began fighting among themselves for control of the empire. Within 22 years (by 301 B.C.) his empire was divided among four of the generals.

Again another great nation had opportunity to know its Creator as a Saviour; but, like the nations before it, Grecia turned away to the _____ of its own devising. [See 1 Cor. 1:22]

9. Which kingdom would overthrow the kingdom of Greece? [Daniel 2:40] Ans. _____

The ancient historian Edward Gibbon, in his- “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire”- referred to “The Iron Monarchy of Rome” using the exact expression from the Bible. No power in the world was strong enough to withstand the Roman legions. Rome had too much money, too many slaves and too much leisure, and this brought about low morals, low minds, low thinking, and weak characters. [The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Chapter 38]

Like the other nations, Rome had the opportunity to receive the Gospel and be transformed, but it turned away from Christ and His disciples to _____.

10. What eventually became of the iron legs of Rome? [Daniel 2:40-43] Ans. They would be _____ into _____

NOTE: The Barbarian invasions begun as early as A.D. 351. History gives A.D. 476 as the date of Rome's fall and the division of its Western territory. These divisions - **TEN** in number, represented by the feet and toes of iron and clay formed the foundations of the many nations that are now located in Europe.

The ten main divisions, corresponding to the ten toes, are given as the Alamanni (**Germans**), Franks (**French**), Burgundians (**Swiss**), Suevi (**Portuguese**), Saxons (**English**), Visigoths (**Spanish**), Lombards (**Italians**), Huruli, Vandals and the Ostrogoths were all extinct.

11. Would the nations of Europe ever be united into one cohesive, lasting, political nation again? [Daniel 2:41-43] Ans. _____

Repeated efforts have been made to unite the nations of Europe by royal marriages. But, as predicted, they have all failed. Of the many men who, down through the centuries, tried to reunite Europe into one mammoth kingdom, six especially stand out:

Charlemagne, Charles V, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, and Hitler who attempted to unite these European nations under one head have all failed. In addition to the six, more recently, the League of Nations, and then the United Nations, have tried to bring these nations together. Men may wonder whether there will be success, but God's Word says, "They shall not cleave one to another." Those seven words form a barrier to every dream of world conquest. No plan to rule the world will succeed.

12. What will be the next event in history and what was it symbolized by? [Daniel 2:34-45; 44-45] Ans. a. The _____ of _____ b. a _____

NOTE: The rock represents the coming kingdom of God. [1 Corinthians 10:4; Luke 20:17-18] We are told that it is cut out of a mountain "**without hands**" - that is, without human intervention. It is of divine origin. Soon all wickedness, evil and rebellion will be gone forever. The forces of evil will be crushed, destroyed, broken in pieces. It will smite the image and fill the whole earth. [Daniel 2:35]

IN THIS BASIC PROPHECY OF THE BIBLE, SIX FACTS STAND OUT:

- There is a God in heaven.
- He has servants on earth.
- His hand is in earthly affairs.
- He predicted the history of the world from Babylon, down to our day.
- He forecasted man's failure, in every instance, to truly unite the nations of the world.
- God's eternal kingdom is to be set up in the process of time.

NOTE: The kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome have passed from the scene of action. We are now living in the last division, represented by the feet and toes of the image. The course of history is almost run. The next act, according to the prophecy, will be the coming of Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Consideration of this prophecy brings us face to face with the most vital issue of our lives. Are we ready to enter Christ's everlasting kingdom? Are we prepared to meet Jesus Christ, the coming King? There is nothing more important to us than to make sure of our eternal home in Christ's kingdom.