

YOUTH BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Lesson 10: Prophetic History of the World

As we learned in our last lesson, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were taken from their home in Judah and placed in the court of the king of Babylon. These young men, along with other young men, were to be given a period of training, and then given a part in assisting in the operation of the government.

Soon after Daniel and his three friends were taken to Babylon, they were faced with a test. The king had ordered that all the young men whom he had favored by bringing them to live in the palace, were to be fed with the food that was served at his table. This was a problem for Daniel and his friends, because much of the food that the king served was food that God had forbidden them to eat. This food had also been offered to idols.

Together, Daniel and his friends decided that they would not eat the king's food. They went to talk to Melzar, the man who had been given charge over them. Melzar liked these young men, but he was afraid to give them anything other than what the king had ordered. He was afraid that these young men would not be healthy, and he knew that if they should become sickly, and the king found out that he had not been feeding them the food that had been ordered, the king would be very angry with him.

Daniel and his friends proposed a test. They suggested that Melzar allow them to eat just simple and wholesome foods for ten days. After that time, they would again appear before Melzar and he could see for himself if they had grown weaker or looked more poorly than the other men. Melzar agreed to this test.

1. At the end of ten days, how did Daniel and his friends' appearance compare with that of the other young men? Daniel 1:15. They looked sick _____ or healthy _____?

“And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.”

Note: God always blesses us when we honor Him by our obedience.

2. At the end of three years of training, how did Daniel and his friends compare to the other wise men? Daniel 1:20. They were _____ times better.

“And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.”

Note: A short time later, Nebuchadnezzar, the king, had gone to bed wondering about the future. He had looked at the great city of Babylon, it seemed like it could stand forever. The city was surrounded by a large wall, and around the outside of the city was a large moat of water. This moat of water was formed

by the river Euphrates that ran right through the middle of the city. On both sides of the river, as it ran through the city, were high walls with brass gates. To the king the city looked much too strong to ever be captured by an enemy.

While thinking on these things, and wondering if his kingdom would last forever, the king fell asleep. That night he had a strange dream. The next morning when he tried to remember it, Nebuchadnezzar couldn't remember a thing about it. He felt impressed, however, that somehow the dream had answered his question about the future of his kingdom, and he called a meeting of the wise men.

3. For what purpose was this meeting called? Daniel 2:3. To _____ the _____.

“And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.”

4. What did the wise men tell the king? Daniel 2:10, 11. There is _____ a _____ that can show the king's matter.

“The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”

Note: These wise men belonged to a group of men who claimed to be able to foretell future events before they happened. Because the wise men could not tell the king the meaning of his dream, the king became very angry and ordered that they all be arrested and killed.

Daniel and his friends had not been called to the first meeting, but because they were a part of the wise men, the king's officer came to arrest them, along with the other wise men. Daniel asked for time, promising that he would tell the king his dream. That night, he and his friends prayed to God in heaven to reveal to them the king's dream, and its meaning. In a night vision, God revealed to Daniel the dream, and its meaning.

5. What had the king seen in his dream? Daniel 2:31. A Great _____.

“Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.”

6. What was the image made of? Daniel 2:32, 33. Head _____; Breast _____; Belly _____; Legs _____; Feet _____ & _____.

“This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.”

Head—Gold
Breast and arms—Silver
Belly and thighs—Brass
Legs—Iron
Feet—Iron mixed with clay

7. What happened to the image? Daniel 2:34, 35. A _____ smote it.

“Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”

8. Whom did the head of gold represent? Daniel 2:37, 38. The king and _____ of Babylon.

“Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.”

Note: Nebuchadnezzar was by far the greatest king to rule the empire of Babylon. His father began the empire, and died before it was fully established. After Nebuchadnezzar’s death, the kingdom only lasted 23 more years. For this reason, when the king was told that he was the head of gold, it is to say that Babylon itself was represented by the head of gold.

9. How would the second empire compare with Babylon? Daniel 2:39. It would be _____.

“And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.”

Note: It is generally thought that the superior kingdom overcomes the inferior, but this prophecy reveals just the opposite was true.

10. What kingdom captured Babylon? Daniel 5:28-31. The _____ & _____.

“PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.”

Note: While the empire that the Medes and Persians formed was stronger in terms of military strength and the size of the territory they conquered, it never equaled Babylon in wealth or learning.

11. Who was the king of Babylon at this time? Daniel 5:1.

_____.

“Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.”

12. While the king was holding a feast, what appeared on the palace wall? Daniel 5:5. _____ of a man’s _____.

“In the same hour came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king’s palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.”

Note: The words on the wall were: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. The king did not understand what the words meant, so he called his wise men, but they were not able to tell him the meaning.

13. Who was then brought before the king to tell him the meaning of the dream? Daniel 5:13. then was _____ brought.

“Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?”

Daniel told the king the meaning of the writing. It said: “MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” Daniel 5:25-28

More than 100 years before Babylon fell, the Lord had revealed to Isaiah the prophet, how the city would fall and even named the man who would conquer it. You can read about this in Isaiah 44:27-28; 45:1, 2. Under the leadership of Cyrus, the Persian, the armies of the Medes and Persians were able to dig ditches and turn the River Euphrates aside for a short time. While the river was turned out of its course, Cyrus led his men along the river bed through the city, where they found the large brass gates open. They were able to march into the city and capture it, almost without a fight.

While this prophecy doesn’t tell us what nation is represented by the brass, chapter 8 of the book of Daniel tells us that it was Greece. About 200 years after the Medes and Persians captured Babylon, the Greek armies under the brilliant general, Alexander the Great, defeated the Persians. We know from both history books, and from the New Testament, that the fourth empire, that which ruled the earth at the time of Jesus, was Rome. It was Rome that was represented by the legs of iron.

14. What is said of the strength of the fourth kingdom? Daniel 2:40. It would _____ in pieces and _____.

“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.”

15. What is shown by the mixture of clay and iron in the feet and toes of the image? Daniel 2:41. It shall be _____.

“And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.”

Note: This is a very important point. The prophet did not describe three world empires, or even five, he describes four and says there will be no more. There has been no world empire since the downfall of the Roman Empire. During the more than fifteen centuries since Rome fell, many strong men have tried to set up another worldwide empire, but all of them have failed. God’s Word said four, and no more.

16. What is to take place in the days of the nations represented by this mixture? Daniel 2:44. The _____ of heaven would set up a _____.

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

Note: After Daniel told the king his dream, the king promoted Daniel to a very high position in the kingdom. At Daniel’s request, he also gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego important positions of trust.

There was one part of the dream that Nebuchadnezzar did not like. The more he thought about it, the more it troubled him. He had been pleased when Daniel told him that he was the head of gold, but it troubled him to think that his kingdom would not last forever. In his mind, he became determined that the part of the dream that told the rise of other kingdoms was wrong. In order to show this, the king built a large image, much like the one he had seen in his dream.

17. How was this image different than the one the king had seen in his dream? Daniel 3:1. It was all _____.

“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.”

Note: As Babylon was represented by a head of gold in his dream, the king determined that this image would be solid gold. In this way, he was trying to show

that instead of another kingdom following Babylon, that Babylon would last as a great world empire forever.

18. What did the king order everyone to do when the musical instruments played? Daniel 3:5. Ye _____ down and _____.

“That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up.”

19. What was to happen to anyone who disobeyed? Daniel 3:6. They would be put in a _____ Furnace.

“And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”

20. Who refused to bow down to the image? Daniel 3:12. S _____, M _____, and A _____.

“There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

Note: The king decided to give these three young men another chance, but they told the king that this was not necessary. They told him that they were not afraid, and that their God, whom they served, was able, if He chose, to deliver them from the fiery furnace.

Then, the king became very angry and ordered that the furnace should be heated seven times hotter. He then ordered that some of his strongest men take these three Hebrews and throw them into the fire.

21. As the king looked, what did he see in the furnace? Daniel 3:24, 25. He saw _____ men.

“Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

Note: The king then called them to come out of the furnace. When the three faithful men of God came out, it was discovered that they didn't even have the smell of smoke on them. All that had burned was the ropes with which they had been bound before they were cast into the furnace.

Before the king and all the important officers of his kingdom, God had revealed Himself as a God above all other gods. What Israel as a nation had refused to do, in revealing God to the other nations, God was able to do through these four faithful Hebrews in the court of a heathen king.