

Nebuchadnezzar's Statue



SABBATH—OCTOBER 2

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Daniel 2.

MEMORY TEXT: “ ‘He [God] changes times and seasons. He sets up kings. He removes them [the kings] from power. The wisdom of those [people] who are wise comes from him [God]. He gives knowledge to those who have understanding’ ” (Daniel 2:21, NIV).

YEARS AGO, A PSYCHIC¹ NAMED CHEIRO WARNED W. T. STEAD not to travel by water during April 1912. In April 1912, Stead lost his life on the *Titanic*.² In the summer of 1961, psychic Jeane Dixon predicted³ that United Nations secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld would die in a “plane crash in mid-September.” On September 18, 1961, the secretary-general did die in a plane crash. What does this prove? Satan can make prophecies and then make them come true. Nothing more!

We find prophecy about the future of nations hundreds and thousands of years ahead of time in Daniel 2. This prophecy, and Daniel's explanation, are proof that the Holy Spirit guided the writing of the Bible.

This week, we will study this powerful and faith-supporting prophecy.

A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON: What test did the king give to the wise men to make sure of their interpretation of his dream? How does God show His power in Daniel 2? What does Daniel 2 teach us about God? In what ways does Daniel 2 show our human weakness and dependence upon God?

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, October 9.

¹psychic—a person who “sees” what will happen in the future. What a psychic “sees” is not from God, but from Satan.

²the *Titanic*—the world-famous ship that sank after hitting an iceberg.

³predicted—to say what will happen in the future.

SUNDAY—OCTOBER 3

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PROBLEM (Daniel 2:1-13).

Did Nebuchadnezzar really forget his dream? Or did he just want to test the wise men to see if they were as clever as they said they were (Daniel 2:5)?

The King James Version follows the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). The King James Version translates the first words of the king as “the thing [dream] is gone from me.” This means that the king had forgotten the dream. Modern translations follow the Aramaic (later Hebrew) text, which means “‘my [the king’s] decision is firm’ ” (NKJV). Both translations may be true. The king forgot part of the dream. But he used the fact that he forgot part of the dream to test the wise men. If the king had forgotten the dream completely, he would not have worried about it.

“The Lord in His wisdom had a purpose in giving Nebuchadnezzar this dream. He also caused the king to forget much of the dream but to remember the dream’s fearful (terrible) part. The Lord wanted to show that the wise men of Babylon were false prophets.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Youth’s Instructor*, September 1, 1903.

Nebuchadnezzar probably was afraid of the dream’s meaning. He was angry that the wisest men of Babylon were unable to help him. So he ordered them to be killed. This was a serious threat.

Cutting up the bodies of enemies and burning their houses was common practice in the Middle East.

What truth were the wise men forced to admit? Daniel 2:10, 11.

The Babylonians did not think the gods would come and live in human flesh. But Christians know that God really “became a human being. He made his home with us” (John 1:14, NIV). The failure of the wise men to tell the king the meaning of his dream gave Daniel a wonderful opportunity to show something about the God he served.



**God “made his home with us”
(John 1:14, NIV).**

Are you able to admit that you are helpless? How does it help you to know that God is able to help you?

MONDAY—OCTOBER 4

**DANIEL'S PRAYER MEETINGS
(Daniel 2:14-23).**

What can we learn from the answer of Daniel and his friends to the king's death command? Daniel 2:17, 18.

Daniel and his friends here faced their first death threat. Throughout the book of Daniel, death threatens God's people. This is very important to believers who are living at the end of time, because they will have to face the threat of death, too. (Revelation 13:13-18).

What are some of the important parts of Daniel's prayer?

Daniel 2:20 _____

Daniel 2:21 _____

Daniel 2:22 _____

Daniel 2:23 _____

What does Daniel's prayer show about what they understood of God's power?

Notice how Daniel began his prayer with praise to God. In the Old Testament, people often praised God (Judges 5:9; Psalm 103:1-5; Psalm 134:1).



Praise God! He helps me feel strong "just like an eagle" (Psalm 103:5, NIV).

Daniel's prayer of praise emphasizes that there is a God who is in control. He is also a God who communicates closely with His people. Through the dream, God gave Nebuchadnezzar the truth that He uses His power both in heaven and on earth.

What do you say to someone who, after reading Daniel 2:14-23, asks, "Why has God not answered my prayers in such a powerful way?"

TUESDAY—OCTOBER 5

**DANIEL'S TESTIMONY⁴
(Daniel 2:24-30).**

How did Daniel react to the fact that God had shown the dream to him? Daniel 2:24-30.

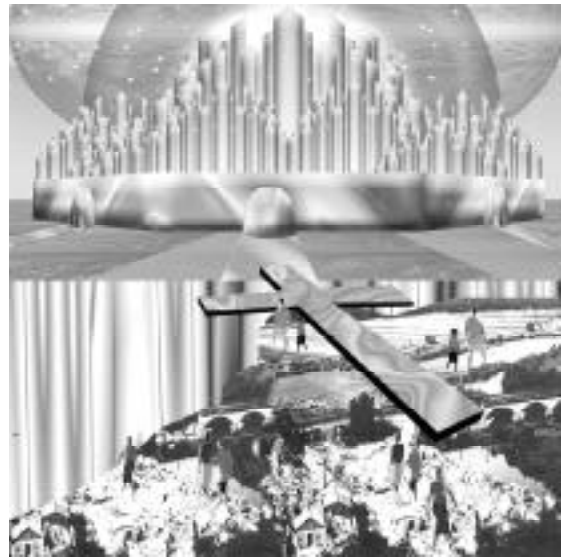
⁴testimony—the good things about God that we tell to other people.

After Daniel took care of the wise men, he stood before the king. He explained to the king that the wise men of Babylon and their gods could not know the meaning of the king's dream. Daniel showed that there was a God in heaven who could tell the meaning of dreams. Daniel was not ashamed or afraid to confess⁵ his God before the king. He also denied any special wisdom or knowledge for himself as the reason for his interpretation of the dream. Daniel gave credit to God for knowing the dream and the dream's interpretation. He seemed to understand clearly that he needed to depend fully on God. That is how salvation works, too. We know we are sinners. We know how helpless we are against sin. We know we cannot solve the problems of sin and helplessness. We must understand that we need to depend fully on Jesus.

What do the following verses tell us about how impossible it is for us to save ourselves? Romans 3:23; Romans 8:3; 1 Corinthians 15:14-17.

As sinners, we are completely separated from God, who is the Author of all life. But thanks to Jesus, who is both God and human, we can be reunited with the Author of life. Only Someone who is God and a sinless human who kept God's eternal⁶ law perfectly, can bridge the separation between heaven and earth. So Jesus is

the One who can solve the one thing that we can never solve: the problem of death.



Only Jesus is a bridge between heaven and earth.

Under the threat of death, Daniel and his friends prayed. Most people, even atheists,⁷ would have done the same thing. Why do you think prayer was something Daniel and his friends did all the time? How might their daily prayer life explain why God answered their prayer the way He did?

WEDNESDAY—OCTOBER 6

THE STATUE AND WHAT IT MEANT (Daniel 2:28-45).

What is the meaning of “the latter days” in Daniel 2:28, KJV? (Read

⁵confess—to say that you believe in God.

⁶eternal—forever; without beginning or end; lasting forever.

⁷atheists—people who do not believe in God.

also **Genesis 49:1; Numbers 24:14; Deuteronomy 4:30; Deuteronomy 31:29.**)

The “latter days” means “in the future” or “in days to come.” “Latter days” can also mean: (1) a certain future period in the history of Israel (Deuteronomy 4:30); (2) the future history of Israel beginning with the takeover of Canaan (Genesis 49:1) or the time of the kings (Numbers 24:14); or (3) the time of the Messiah (Jesus) (Isaiah 2:2; Hosea 3:5) or the time just before the Messiah (Ezekiel 38:16). Most modern Bible versions translate “latter days” as “in the days to come” (Genesis 49:1, NASB); “in time to come” (Deuteronomy 31:29, NRSV); or “in later days” (Deuteronomy 4:30, NIV).

From the study of the words “latter days” in the Old Testament, we can decide that “the latter days” in Daniel 2 means the future. This future began in the time of Daniel and reaches to Jesus’ second coming. His second coming is represented by the stone kingdom (Daniel 2:34, 35, 44, 45).

What did God show Nebuchadnezzar in his dream? What did these parts of the statue symbolize? Daniel 2:30-45.

The dream was a prophecy about what would happen thousands of years later. The head of the golden statue is clearly the kingdom of Babylon (626–539 B.C.) (Daniel 2:38). From history, we know that the other three kingdoms following

Babylon were Media-Persia (539–331 B.C.), Greece (331–168 B.C.), and Rome (168 B.C.–A.D. 476). The Roman Empire ruled longer than the other three kingdoms put together. But no other world power came after Rome. Rome was divided into many kingdoms. The feet of iron and clay meant that some of these kingdoms would be strong and some of the kingdoms would be weak. These kingdoms rose and fell as the dream said they would. These kingdoms were the nations that make up the nations of modern Europe, which still are separate national and political governments.

What is the meaning of the stone cut without hands? Daniel 2:34, 44.



The stone represents Jesus. He will establish an everlasting⁸ kingdom.

The stone represents Jesus (Isaiah 28:16; 1 Corinthians 10:4; Luke 20:17, 18). Jesus will destroy all kingdoms and establish an everlasting kingdom when

⁸everlasting—lasting forever; eternal; without beginning or end.

He returns. According to the dream, these kingdoms are not somehow changed or restored.⁹ They are completely removed, broken into chaff,¹⁰ and then blown away.

What Jesus does to these other kingdoms at the Second Coming is the same as what He does to us. What needs to be “crushed” and “blown away” in us so that we can follow Him? (Read also Matthew 16:25; Galatians 2:20.)

THURSDAY—OCTOBER 7

DANIEL'S PROMOTION (Daniel 2:46, 47).

What was Nebuchadnezzar's reaction to Daniel's explanation of his dream? Daniel 2:46, 47.

The king wanted to worship Daniel as some kind of god according to Oriental (Mid-Eastern) custom. This is almost the same as the people of Lycaonia and Miletus, who considered Paul a god (Acts 14:11; Acts 28:6). But Paul refused to let the people worship him. We can be sure Daniel refused to let the king worship him. But we do not have any record of his answer. The king made Daniel governor over Babylon and head of all the wise men. In his promotion, Daniel ex-

perienced the truth Jesus taught when He said, “Everyone who has that kind of knowledge will be given more [knowledge]. In fact, they will have very much [knowledge]” (Matthew 13:12, NIV).

What does Daniel's request for his friends show about his character? Daniel 2:49.

This request may seem to be simple. But we must remember that Babylonians probably had to give up their jobs to make room for these unknown Hebrews! In God's watchcare, Daniel's friends now share his promotion. The chief butler in the story of Joseph (Genesis 40:23) forgot Joseph. But Daniel did not forget his friends.

God used Daniel's experience in Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar's dream to make Daniel a powerful influence in Babylon. Joseph in Egypt had almost the same experience (Genesis 50:20). Both Joseph and Daniel are examples of the Bible principle that “in all things God works for the good of those [people] who love him [God]” (Romans 8:28, NIV).

Read Daniel 2 again. One lesson we should learn is that God is in control of the world's history. Compare¹¹ this with what we saw in Jesus' life, and His great personal care for people (Matthew 10:29-31). How does God's power help us to trust Him in our personal lives?

⁹restored—to make something as it was in the beginning.

¹⁰chaff—the husks or shells of wheat that are left when the wheat is crushed.

¹¹compare—show how things are the same.

FRIDAY—OCTOBER 8

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 491–502.

“The king had admitted the power of God. He said to Daniel, ‘I’m [I am] sure your God is the greatest God of all. He explains mysteries [dreams]’ ” (Daniel 2:47, NIV). For a while afterward, Nebuchadnezzar was influenced by the fear¹² of God. But his heart was not yet cleansed from worldly ambition and desire for self-glory. The success of his rule filled him with pride. After a while, he stopped honoring God, and went back to his idol worship.”—Adapted from *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 503, 504.

Lessons from Daniel 2

1. The fulfillment of the dream in Daniel 2 is proof that the Bible is God's book.
2. The dream in Daniel 2 shows clearly that everything and everyone on this earth will die if not connected to God. We are all on our way to eternal nothingness if we do not take God's hand.
3. Often historians¹³ will tell us that “history teaches us that history teaches us nothing.” This may be

true for some people. But Christians know that history is the story of God working out His plans to end the great controversy (war) between Satan and Jesus. Jesus is not a do-nothing landlord. He does not let His house fall apart because of careless renters. The correct study of history leads to the understanding and faith that God, who controls the universe, also guides the smallest particle of life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does Daniel 2 give proof of the power of Bible truth? If you study with someone who doubts the Bible, what examples of God's power could you discuss in Daniel 2?
2. How does the statue's feet of iron and clay symbolize the modern nations that were a part of ancient¹⁴ Rome?

SUMMARY: Daniel 2 provides the blueprint for apocalyptic¹⁵ prophecy. It lays the foundation (basis) for the rest of the prophecies in this book. Nebuchadnezzar's dream was a prophecy. The dream showed how foolish the wise men were. It also gave Daniel opportunity to tell the king about the God of heaven.

¹²fear—great respect.

¹³historians—people who study history for a living.

¹⁴ancient—very old.

¹⁵apocalyptic—“a showing”; apocalyptic prophecies show us what will happen at the end of human history, through the use of visions, dreams, and symbols.