

How Daniel's 2,600-Year-Old Prophecy Prepares You for Everyday Kingdom Living

The Lord has foreordained earthly kingdoms from before the foundation of the world. He created the universe and all things therein. He establishes and removes earthly kings. He determines the boundaries and appointed times of all of the nations. Our King is in control, and His purposes will prevail.

"It is He who changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and sets up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who know understanding" (Dan. 2:21).

"He has made from one blood every nation of men to live on the entire face of the earth, having appointed fixed times and the boundaries of their habitation" (Acts 17:26).

The story of Daniel and Babylon King Nebuchadnezzar's forgotten dream exemplify these principles. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which disturbed him, but he could not remember it. He called all of his magicians, conjurers, sorcerers and Chaldeans to tell him the dream and its interpretation, but they could not. In anger, he told them that if they did not comply, they would be killed, but if they told him his dream they would be promoted. Daniel found out about the order and sent word that God would tell him the dream. After prayer, God showed him the dream which he proceeded to tell King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:1-30): "But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets and makes known to King Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head upon your bed are these" (Dan. 2:28).

The king had dreamed of a great statue. Its head was gold, its

breast and arms were silver, its belly and thighs were bronze, its legs were iron and its feet were partly of iron and partly of clay. Then a stone, which was cut without hands, struck the statue's feet and crushed them and the rest of the statue. The statue had become like chaff. The winds came and blew all the chaff away. The stone became a mountain and filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:31-35).

David interpreted the dream for the king while giving full credit to God. The head of gold was King Nebuchadnezzar. God had established his kingdom and rule. The breast and arms of silver were a second kingdom (Medo-Persian) which would be inferior to the Babylonian reign. The belly and thighs of bronze were a third kingdom (Greek) which would rule the world. The legs of iron and feet of iron and clay were a fourth kingdom (Roman), that would be initially very strong but then would be a divided kingdom where parts were brittle. The rock will be a kingdom that the God of heaven establishes that will eventually destroy all of the other kingdoms (Dan. 2:36-45):

"You, O king, are the king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory" (Dan. 2:37).

"In the days of these kings the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. And the kingdom shall not be left to another people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44).

Examination of the prophecy leaves one in awe of our King. Daniel interpreted the dream in roughly 600 B.C. In other words, he was talking about a Medo-Persian empire about 60 years later, a Greek empire nearly 300 years later and a Roman empire more than 500 years later. God truly knows the end from the beginning.

In addition, the arrival of the Roman empire, at that particular time in history, was perfect for our Messiah to explain the kingdom of God to his followers. There were few examples of an all-powerful kingdom. At that time, Rome was the most powerful kingdom in history and controlled most of the known world.

Rome would conquer an area, leave the residents there and send Roman citizens to administer their acquired territory. Our citizenship is in heaven, but we are called to bring our King's culture, laws, love, power and influence to earth. We are called to make citizens of heaven until everyone has heard the gospel of the kingdom. Those who chose to ignore Caesar were enemies of Rome. Those who choose to ignore the rule of our King do so at their peril.

Interpretation of the dream also demonstrated that God answers prayers, that He is sovereign over nations and individuals, that He is wiser and more knowledgeable than everyone, that He cares for the lives of His servants, that He can use even the heathen for His will and that He wants to show His plans and purposes to us. All of the lessons are equally applicable today.

Daniel prophesied 2,600 years ago that that the kingdom of God will be victorious. The stone cut without hands is symbolic of the kingdom of God established by Jesus. He has been and is raising up and tearing down earthly kingdoms, but the kingdom of God will prevail:

"Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: