CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
AUGUST10 2024

Scripture Story: Daniel 2.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 40.

God even gave the dream



Photo by Colleen Cahill

flashlight

"In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 499).

keytext

"Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, 'Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.' "

(Daniel 2:46, 47, NIV)

what do you think?

Please answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think that God allowed king Nebuchadnezzar to forget his dream? (See Daniel 2:1-5.)
2. What was Daniel's response when he found out that none of the Babylonian wise men could interpret the king's dream? (See Daniel 2:16-18.)
3. How did God honor Daniel's faithfulness? (See Daniel 2:19.)
4. How did Daniel witness to the king about the God Who revealed the dream and its interpretation? (See Daniel 2:27, 28.)

did you know?

Did you know that during the Babylonian Empire gold was the most prevalent metal in Babylon? Gold was therefore a fitting characteristic of the Babylonian Empire that dominated the ancient world from 604 to 538 B.C.

During the Medo-Persian domination, 538-331 B.C., silver was the standard currency. In 331 B.C. the Medo-Persian Empire was conquered by the Greek armies whose armor was made of bronze. In 146 B.C. the Greek Empire was conquered by the Roman armies. The Roman Empire was in rule between 146 B.C.-A.D. 476. and was known for its iron rule and fierce armies whose armor was made of iron. In A.D. 476 the Roman Empire lost its power and it was divided among various barbarian tribes. Much like iron and clay cannot be organically fused together, so in spite of repeated attempts, the political powers that have since come and gone could never achieve cohesive unity. The vision of the great statue culminates with Jesus' second coming that will usher in God's glorious kingdom.

INTO THE STORY

"The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), 'Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?'

"Daniel replied, 'No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

"'As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

"'Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

"'This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

"'After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

" 'In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

" 'The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.' "

(Daniel 2:26-45, NIV)

punch lines

"Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior" **(Habakkuk 3:17, 18, NIV).**

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God" **(Psalm 20:7, NIV).**

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" **(Hebrews 11:1, NIV).**

"For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith" **(1 John 5:4, NIV).**

OUT OF THE STORY

What does the giant statue's head of gold represent? (See Daniel 2:36-38.)

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What is the meaning of the chest and arms of silver? Next, what kingdom did the belly and thighs of bronze represent? (See verse 39.)

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What kingdom did the legs of iron represent? (See verse 40.)

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What do the feet partly of iron and partly of clay represent? What are the characteristics of the statue's feet? (See verses 41-43.)

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What glorious event will mark the end of the history presented in the vision about the great statue? (See verses 44, 45.)

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What can you share about this prophecy with someone who does not believe in God? What does the accurate fulfillment of this prophecy reveal about God?

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further insight

"Faith is trusting God—believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 253

"This prophecy of Daniel is an introductory lesson. It prepares us for the even more stupendous predictions that come later. As we observe its fulfillment in international affairs over the centuries, our minds are opened to understand other outstanding prophecies in Daniel and Revelation that deal with vital developments in the Christian church; and we are prepared for still other, reassuring predictions about the wonderful things Jesus is doing for us right now. Arranging the prophecies in order, from simple to complex and from public to personal, is another evidence of how much God cares for us."—C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares: The Message of Daniel for You and Your Family*, vol. 1, p. 38

Sabbath

Read Daniel 2:27, 28.

Answer the questions in the *What Do You Think?* section of the lesson. Daniel once again is found to be completely relying on the wisdom that God has given him.

It's amazing when you think about everything Daniel was able to do throughout his life by having complete dependence on God. Ask yourself: "Do we live our lives with that same dependence on God?" "Why is it that we have such a hard time depending on God for everything?" Remember, Daniel didn't depend on God just for the interpretation of the dream; he depended on God for the dream itself.

Have you ever taken credit for something that was not entirely your accomplishment? Have you ever been a part of something great that was not as much your work as that of a team, yet you still thought you should get the glory? Daniel was very clear on whom to give credit to for the telling and the interpretation of the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. His is a great example of how to give credit to God for the things He does and reveals to us. He began by proclaiming God's divine power and His role in the events of history.

Sunday

Read Daniel 2:26-45.

Answer the questions in the *Out of the Story* section of the lesson.

Daniel, was not interested in proving his worth to the king; rather, he was interested in proving God's worth to the king.

What can Daniel's story teach us?

Consider the identifying marks of the kingdoms described in the vision of the great statue and their succession. Study carefully the historical facts that show the accuracy with which this prophecy has thus far been fulfilled. How can you explain this prophecy to someone who is looking for historical evidence for the fulfillment of prophecies that were given by God?

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Monday

Read Daniel 2:46, 47.

When we allow God to be who He is, in all of His glory, even the most cynical among us see that God is the God of all. The king recognized the power of God immediately as He worked through His servant Daniel.

Describe a time when God could work through you so that those around you could witness His loving care and leading in your life.

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Tuesday

Read Hebrews 11:1.

What new facts did you discover from the *Did You Know?* section of the lesson? As the quote in the *Flashlight* section tells us, God has in His hand the events of history. This gives us a great deal of comfort, knowing that no matter what happens, God has this all under control!

Wednesday

So what is faith? Reread *Punch Lines* and *Further Insight* for some thoughts about faith.

Faith is _____

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It is essential for us to trust that God is in control of human history and therefore of the events in our lives. What reassurance do you have that God cares enough for you to guide your future if you trust Him?

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Thursday

Read Psalm 20:7.

How do you describe faith in God? Sometimes it is as simple as trusting Him when you don't have the answers and the circumstances are dim. Sometimes it is trusting Him when all you have left is that trust. God will not fail you. Believe and have faith in Him!

Friday

Read Romans 1:17.

How can you apply in practice the principle of living by faith?

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Give God permission to guide your future that you may fulfill His plan for your life.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 40.

**Royalty and Ruin* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.