

Devoted: Our Place in History

Daniel 1:26-35

Read Daniel 2:26-35 together:

The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?" Daniel answered the king and said, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind. "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

? It is obvious that Nebuchadnezzar is terribly frightened by his dream. What do you suppose he might have thought the dream was meant to tell him?

? What do you suppose he thought the image in the dream meant?

Nebuchadnezzar is told that God is revealing to him a mystery of the latter days. The God of heaven, through his servant Daniel, reveals to Nebuchadnezzar the progression of kingdoms that will come after his kingdom of Babylon.

? What do you think is the significance of the metals of the various parts of the statue (representing the various kingdoms)?

Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that there is only one source Who can reveal the future to him. That source is NOT wise men, enchanters, astrologers, or magicians. It is God.

The Latter Days: Accomplished Now

As we look back through ancient history, it is obvious to us that the kingdoms revealed to Nebuchadnezzar were Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greece, and Rome. This revelation covers 1,000 years of world history and kingdoms that would dominate the known world (600 BC to 400 AD).

- ? What can we learn from this?
- ? Does this strengthen your trust in God's revealed Word?
- ? How do you view the bible? Do you let the reality of its truth and accuracy really settle into your soul?
- ? What are ways that you allow the truth of God's Word to settle into your soul?

The study of prophecy should cause one primary response: humility and awe before a majestic God!

The Latter Days: Yet to Come

The dream revealed to Nebuchadnezzar has been fulfilled, but only in part! The first four kingdoms of gold, silver, bronze, and iron have come and gone. But what about the stone that is never destroyed and which destroys every prior kingdom? That stone represents another kingdom, yet to come, that is an eternal kingdom.

And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."

Daniel 2: 44 & 45

- ? What kingdom is represented by the stone?
- ? Why? What scriptural proof can you offer in describing this kingdom?
- ? What do you imagine Daniel thought of all these revelations? Do you think he really understood any fuller than we understand today?

The Latter Days: Today

We, like Daniel, are living in the "latter days." We are closer to the end of the latter days than Daniel, but we have no clearer view of when the latter days will come to an end. We have seen the beginning of the Stone's great kingdom, however.

- ? If you are a Christian, a part of the kingdom of the Stone, then how did Jesus describe His kingdom?
- ? What are the significances of the metaphors Jesus uses to describe His kingdom (salt, light, seed, and yeast)?

Jesus warned of a coming “tribulation.” There is uncertainty as to the presence or absence of Christians during this time of tribulation, but Jesus made it clear that His children would be persecuted! Whether it is “The Tribulation” or not, Jesus’ followers are certain to face trouble for their faith in this life.

? Why do you think Christians suffer?

? What good is there in suffering as a Christian?

The kingdom of God is made known, it is declared in those who follow their King. His power is our power; His authority is our authority as we anticipate the final victory over sin and death. One day the Stone that destroyed all prior kingdoms will become a great mountain and fill the whole earth (Dan. 2:35).

? Are you aligned with this great reality or are you just spectating?

? Have you looked at the worst-case scenario, shuddered in fear, and reached for the only ROCK that holds?