

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Daniel 2:1-49

MEMORY VERSE

DANIEL 2:47

“Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Two plastic spoons and two hard-boiled eggs.

A cardboard tube for each child, two 4” squares of clear plastic wrap for each child, tape, metallic confetti, yellow paper, and markers.

A copy of the “Drawing the King’s Dream” template for each child.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Keep Your Focus

You will need two plastic spoons and two hard-boiled eggs. Ask the children to form two lines facing each other and about 2’ apart. Choose a child from each line to hold a plastic spoon with a hard-boiled egg balanced on it. The “egg walkers” will start from opposite ends of the lines and try to walk between the groups as children try to distract them. Make sure to explain that they cannot get out of line or touch the “egg walkers.” When everyone has had a chance to go down the line, talk about the things that may distract our focus from Jesus and how we can direct our focus back to Jesus.

In today’s lesson, Daniel was in a difficult situation. An edict went out that all of the king’s advisors were to be killed. But, Daniel kept his focus on God, and God delivered him. God was able to use Daniel in a great way because his focus was in the right place.

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever had a dream that you did not fully remember, yet you could not forget that you had the dream? King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had such a dream one night. Though he could not remember what the dream was about, the dream was really troubling to him. He asked his magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers to tell him what his dream meant.

DANIEL 2:1-13

Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.

Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream."

Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation."

The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap.

"However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation."

They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation."

The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm:

"if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation."

The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean.

"It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

The King's dream was so disturbing to him that he called all the wise men of Babylon to not only tell him what the dream meant, but also what it was he had dreamed.

King Nebuchadnezzar's wise men were, indeed, in a pickle. Of course, they could not tell him the dream or give the interpretation of it. They tried to reason with the king, explaining that such a request had never been asked before and simply was not possible. King Nebuchadnezzar's temper flared and he commanded that they should all be destroyed.

Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, had finished their training and entered into the service of King Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, when the order went out that the wise men should be killed, it included Daniel and his friends.

DANIEL 2:14-18

Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon;

he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation.

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,

that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel spoke to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard who had received the order to kill all the wise men. Verse 14 states: "Then Daniel answered with counsel *and wisdom*..." Who was Daniel's counselor that would enable him to give a wise answer to Arioch?

True counsel and wisdom come from God. This gives us a glimpse into Daniel's character—he walked closely with God; and when the right answer was of great importance, he was prepared. He did not respond defensively, seek to shift the blame, or hurl accusations toward the king, he answered with counsel and wisdom. Proverbs 15:1 tells us, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." How important that we live in close relationship with God so that if we find ourselves "on the spot" as did Daniel, counsel and wisdom from the Lord will help us.

Daniel asked for more time so that he may satisfy the king's requests. Then, he went into his house and asked his friends--Shadrach, Meshach and Abendego--to pray and ask God for His mercy to reveal this secret so that they might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Daniel was a man of prayer. When faced with difficulty, he knew where to turn. And, He knew where to turn others, also, encouraging his friends to seek God's mercy.

Daniel, though only a young man of 19 or 20, could handle a crisis well. Why? He knew he could trust the One who made him; and thus he sought God's counsel, wisdom, and help. Do you know you can trust God in difficulty? The more you know God, the more you'll trust Him. Get to know Him! Read your Bible; spend time in prayer. **God knows and controls the future.**

DANIEL 2:19-23

Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His.

And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding.

He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him.

"I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand."

God is faithful to His children. Daniel and his friends prayed and God answered their prayers and revealed the secret to Daniel in a night-vision.

How did Daniel respond as he received this great revelation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which no one else—not even the greatest of the king's wise men--could interpret? Daniel declared "the name of God" will be praised forever and ever. He understood that it is God who possesses wisdom and might.

Indeed, God has wisdom and power like no other! He changes times and seasons. He sets up and casts down kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those that possess insight. He reveals the deep and secret things; He knows what is in darkness; and light dwells with Him. As we observe the wonderful qualities of our King, we along with Daniel realize that praise and thanksgiving belong to God, and to God alone.

Through the revelation of this secret, hidden to the king's wise men, God proved Himself to Daniel and to others as the true God in opposition to the gods of the heathen. **God knows and controls the future.**

DANIEL 2:24-30

Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation."

Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation."

The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?"

Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king.

"But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these:

"As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be.

"But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

Daniel announced that he was prepared to make known to the king the dream and its interpretation. When the king asked about Daniel's ability to make known the dream and interpretation, Daniel was careful to direct the king correctly--he was not about to take credit for what God had done. It is "God in heaven" who is able to reveal secrets; God could do all the pagan gods, magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers could not. **God knows and controls the future.**

The king was no doubt thinking about the future of his kingdom as he lay on his bed. Daniel explained that the dream God gave to the king that revealed the future.

Daniel states: "But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart." Daniel seems to site two reasons for God's revelation: 1) to keep Daniel, his friends, and all those threatened with death alive and 2) God who authored the dream desired to reveal the future to King Nebuchadnezzar.

Take note of Daniel's humility: "...this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living..." What an important characteristic humility is! Proverbs 15:33 states "...before honor is humility."

DANIEL 2:31-35

"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.

"This image's head was of fine 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 clay.

"You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which 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 were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel revealed King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The king was gazing upon a huge statue that was awesome in its size and extraordinary in its splendor.

Daniel describes the statue to Nebuchadnezzar. The head was of fine gold. The chest and the arms were of silver. The belly and the thighs, the upper half of the legs, were bronze, or brass. The legs from the thighs to the feet were iron, and the feet were a mixture of two materials--iron and clay.

It must have been quite an image to look at! It would definitely get someone's attention. Note, the material of this image becomes inferior from the head downward: gold, silver, brass, iron, clay; the whole image of metal becomes inferior, finally ending up in clay, losing itself in common earthly matter. The material becomes harder, until it is iron; yet, it then suddenly becomes weak and brittle clay.

While the king gazed in amazement at this huge magnificent structure, a stone was "cut loose" or merely "detached" from a mountainside. It crushed the feet of iron and clay, the most vulnerable part of the whole image. The whole image broke into pieces, from the head to the feet. All the material was ground into powder and scattered like the chaff of the summer thrashing floor. The stone that brought this destruction became a great mountain that filled the whole earth.

Drawing the King's Dream

Supply each child with a copy of the template provided with this lesson. Simply follow the instructions on the template. Use the craft to discuss the meaning of the dream with your children and to reinforce today's theme.

DANIEL 2:36-45

"This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

"You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;

"and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all; you are this head of gold.

"But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

"And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

"Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

"And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

"As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

"Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

Daniel now gives the king the interpretation of the dream. The dream is a prophetic, telling Nebuchadnezzar what will occur in the future. The four metals making up the image are explained as symbolizing four empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece (under Alexander), and Rome.

Daniel tells the king that it is the only true God, “the God of the heavens” that gave him his position and success. Nebuchadnezzar, having dominion over men, beasts, and birds, was the "head of gold" referring to the world-kingdom, Babylon, which he had founded.

In verse 39, the second and third parts of the image are interpreted as the second and third world kingdoms. The second, the silver part of the image, being the chest and arms, would arise after the fall of the Babylonian kingdom. It represented the Medo-Persian Empire with Cyrus as king. Note: We see some deterioration of the metals, from gold to silver. Cyrus' kingdom may have been somewhat inferior to the Babylonian because the Medo-Persian Empire was not one and united as the Babylonian kingdom was.

Next, we go to the third world kingdom, the belly and thighs of bronze. This represented the Greek kingdom of Alexander as well as the four kingdoms that resulted after the death of Alexander. As the belly and the thighs are of bronze, we can see that the unit divides itself into two separate parts, which do not reunite. After Alexander's death, the four parts of his realm were really more like two: Syria and Egypt. These are the two thighs of the statue. They are still separate when the last empire appears on the scene.

The fourth part of the image, the legs and feet, represent a fourth world-kingdom, Rome. That kingdom, with the legs of iron, will be hard and firm like iron. Iron breaks all things in pieces; so this kingdom, which is like iron, will break in pieces and destroy all these prior kingdoms.

The iron does speak of strength, for we have the phrase, "strong as iron." It does not mean that this kingdom is strong in unity, but that it is destructive in its strength. It will crush and demolish as iron crushes and smashes all things. A study of history shows that the Romans were noted for their ability to crush all resistance to their power with an iron heel.

Note: Only the legs of the image are made out of solid iron; the feet and toes are partly of clay and partly of iron. This shows that the kingdom will divide into ten smaller, weaker kingdoms, for clay indicates weakness. Truly prophetic in nature, the ten toes are the future ten nations, ruled by ten kings, which shall come together under the rule of one man. The indication that the iron would be mixed with the miry clay (verse 41) speaks of a possible resurgence of the Roman government.

"In the days of these kings" (the time of the ten kings represented by the ten toes of the statue), God will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed—the millennial kingdom. One day, a smiting stone will crush the entire image representing the world powers with one blow; and Jesus will set up His kingdom and reign over all—King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The smiting stone will become a mountain (symbolic biblically of a kingdom) that fills "the whole earth."

How wonderful to know that this rock is no other than our Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming. Jesus did not destroy the world system when He was on the earth before. He came, in His first coming, as our Redeemer; His purpose was to seek and save the lost. But, in His second coming, He will come to reign. Following the time of Christ, the western part of the Roman Empire collapsed (476 A.D.); the eastern part of the Roman empire collapsed almost 1000 years later (1453 A.D.). Since that time, no other empire or world power has been as great or mighty (reigned over as much of the known world) as the Roman Empire.

Weaker world powers continue to this day, but when the church is raptured, the ten kings will emerge setting up an alliance or confederation. It is during the time of these kings that the smiting stone will strike the image and the government of man will forever come to an end. The millennial Kingdom will begin, and the rule and reign of Jesus Christ will stand forever.

The dream that God gave to Nebuchadnezzar was a vision of the course of the history of the world. God assured the king of the truth of the dream. This will surely happen! **God knows and controls the future.**

DANIEL 2:46-49

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him.

The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret."

Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.

Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

King Nebuchadnezzar was truly impressed. So much so, that he sought to honor Daniel with an offering. Daniel's God could do what none of the Babylonian gods could do. He rightly proclaimed, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." After Nebuchadnezzar had given honor to God, he rewarded Daniel, the servant of God, with gifts and promotion to a high office. Daniel did not forget his three friends who had co-labored with him in prayer—He petitioned the king on their behalf. May we, like Daniel, always remember the significance of those who co-labor with us!

Today, we reflect on Daniel's dream with great anticipation. As the world grows darker, morally and spiritually, we can look beyond what we see at present, and know that a glorious day will come—the day Jesus will come to rule and reign in righteousness and man's feeble efforts to govern himself will come to an end. **God knows and controls the future.**

2 Peter 3:11-13 states, "Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."

Looking ahead to the glorious second coming of our Lord and Savior, what manner (type) of persons should we be? Let us resolve to become men and women of character, who like Daniel, walk closely in fellowship with God receiving His wisdom, counsel, and help in time of need. May we not only know where to turn in times of trouble, but may we turn others to Him as well.

Krazy Kaleidoscope

For this craft, you will need a cardboard tube for each child, two 4-inch squares of clear plastic wrap for each child, tape, metallic confetti, yellow paper and markers.

Give each child a cardboard tube. Have children work in pairs and each tear two 4-inch squares of clear plastic wrap. Tape one piece of plastic over one end of each tube, stretching it tightly and taping the wrap to the tube.

Next, sprinkle about a tablespoon of metallic confetti on top of the plastic and place a yellow paper cross in the confetti. Loosely tape the second piece of plastic wrap over the confetti and tape it to the tube. Use markers to decorate the tubes. When finished, invite the children to point them at a light and peek through them.

People will look at and to all kinds of things for the truth. King Nebuchadnezzar looked to his astrologers and magicians. They couldn't help him. Remember, when you want to see something worthwhile, where you look makes all the difference in the world. Look to God and you will see good things—better days ahead. We who believe in Jesus have a future and a hope.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord, like Daniel, no matter the circumstances, and to thank the Lord that He has our future in His hands and has a glorious plan for us. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

DRAWING THE KING’S DREAM

King Nebuchadnezzar saw a statue in his dream. In the space to your right draw a picture of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw. The statue was divided into 5 parts. On the provided line list the part indicated and whether it was gold, silver, bronze, iron or clay.

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After filling in the blanks; next color your statue according to its’ parts:

- Gold – Yellow
- Silver – Gray
- Brass – Orange
- Iron – Black
- Clay – Brown

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