

THE STORY OF DANIEL

by

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“Aunt Hattie’s Bible Stories” for Boys and Girls

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CHAPTER THREE

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S DREAM

DREAMS! Everyone knows what it is to dream. Some dreams are pleasant and we are sorry to awaken and lose them. Some dreams are very bad and make us afraid. But in the days of the Old Testament, especially, God often made known His future plans through dreams.

Do you remember in the story of Joseph about Pharaoh’s dream and that God gave to Joseph the interpretation of it?

When Daniel and his companions had been in Babylon for some time, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which greatly disturbed him and when he awoke he had forgotten it. He was so troubled that he called together his magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans.

“And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream and my spirit is troubled to know what it meant.”

The Chaldeans, who were supposed to have great wisdom, said to the king,

“O king, live for ever: tell your servants the dream and we will tell you its meaning.”

The king answered, “I have forgotten the dream, it has gone from me. Now you find for me what the dream was and what it meant and if you say that you cannot then I will kill every one of you and make your homes a disgrace. But if you will show me the dream and the interpretation, then I will give you presents and rewards and put you in honorable places in my kingdom.”

They pleaded again that if the king would only tell them the dream then they would tell him the meaning.

The king grew very angry and said they were only wasting time and if they didn't tell him, then the decree would stand.

He said, if they were not able to find out the dream, then neither were they able to interpret it if they did know it and would only prepare lies and corrupt words.

“Now,” he said, “tell me the dream and I will believe the interpretation.”

The king's wise men were in a hard place and considered the king most unreasonable. The fact of the matter was they were a lot of grafters claiming to have powers they did not possess. In great earnestness they again pleaded with the king saying,

“There isn't a man that can show the king's dream; never before has a king, a lord or ruler asked such a thing of any magicians, astrologers or Chaldeans. If you can tell us your dream we can tell you what it means, but none but the gods, who do not dwell in flesh, can bring back the dream.”

The king's anger raged furiously and he at once sent out a decree ordering the death of the wise men of Babylon; not one was to be left. That decree included our four boys who were among the wise men, although yet in training.

Let us imagine we are in the king's court in Babylon that dreadful day when Arioch, the captain of the guard, set forth upon his bloody mission.

I think Arioch's heart was sad as he saw Daniel crossing the court in front of him. Perhaps he said to himself, “I'll have to have that boy slain and he is such a fine fellow. Everybody loves him. Yes, and his three friends will meet the same fate. Four finer young men never lived in this palace. What a mess we are in and all because the king is so unreasonable and angry.”

“Good-evening, Captain,” saluted Daniel as he approached the guard. “But what is the trouble? You look distressed.”

Arioch told Daniel of the king's decree. Daniel listened thoughtfully for a moment and said, “Why is the king in such a hurry to destroy all of us?”

Then it was that Arioch told Daniel the whole story of the forgotten dream and the king's fury.

Not at all frightened nor dismayed, Daniel quietly said, “Take me into the king's presence.”

King Nebuchadnezzar was seated upon his throne and angry; nevertheless, he listened to this gracious youth as he said, “O king, give me time and I will interpret your dream.”

Impressed with the evident sincerity of the young man he granted the request and the decree was lifted for a time.

Daniel, full of faith and confidence in Jehovah God, hurried home to tell his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah what had happened, and concluded by saying, “Why should we be alarmed? Our God is able to deliver us if we ask Him to.”

“What a great God we have,” answered his companions and then they bowed in prayer to the only true God, the God of Israel.

What a prayer meeting they must have had. I know their prayers were definite and believing. They asked God to make known unto them the dream of the king and the meaning of it that their lives might be spared together with all of the wise men of the land.

So confident were they that God had heard them that they went to bed and to sleep.

In the night God came to Daniel in a vision and told him the king’s dream and the interpretation of it, and Daniel was so full of joy that he burst out in a song of praise. I think he called the other boys and sang the song to them:

“Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his:

“And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

“He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

“I thank you and praise you, O God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me what is desired of you for you have made known unto us the king’s matter.”

In the morning, I think, Daniel hurried to the office of Arioch, captain of the guard, to whom he said,

“Take me again before the king for I have received from my God the king’s dream and the meaning of it.”

I think Arioch assumed quite an air of importance as he presented Daniel to the king, for he said, **“I have found a man of the captives of Judah that will make known unto the king his dream.”**

“Are you able to make known to me my dream and tell me what it means?” asked the king.

Daniel answered in a modest way, **“The secret which you demand to know could not be found out by the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, nor showed unto the king.**

“But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to King Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. The dream you had when you were in bed was this;

“O king, the vision which came to you was about the things that shall come to pass in the years that are to come. And God, who reveals secrets, is making known to you what shall come to pass.

“So far as I am concerned, I have no more wisdom in myself than any of your wise men, but for their sakes and for yours this secret has been revealed to me.”

Then Daniel gave to King Nebuchadnezzar the dream and its meaning:

“You, O king, saw a great image. This great image, very bright and excellent, stood before you; and the form was terrible.

“The image’s head was of fine gold, the breast and arms of silver, his body and thighs of brass; his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

“And while you were looking upon this great and terrible monster a stone, loosened without the aid of human hands, came crashing down and smote the feet of the image which were of iron and clay, and the whole image fell down and was broken into pieces so fine that the gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay were blown away like the chaff on a summer threshing floor and nothing at all remained of the image. Then while you were still looking upon the wondrous sight the smiting stone grew larger and larger until it filled the whole earth.”

What a strange dream. Is it any wonder the king was troubled about it?

Daniel continued. **“Now I’ll tell you what it means. You, O king, are a king of kings; for the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory; and God has given into your hand the control of the whole inhabited earth. You are the emperor of the world. You are represented by the head of gold.**

“After you have served your time as world monarch then another nation shall come into power but it will not be as strong as yours has been. It is like the silver of the breast and arms of the image.

“Last of all the fourth kingdom shall come, strong as iron, like the legs and feet of the image. With great cruelty it shall break in pieces and subdue the nations of the earth and rule over them.

“You saw that the feet of the image were of iron and clay, so part of it will be as strong as iron and part as brittle as clay.

“And in the days of these kings, that is, the ten kings represented by the ten toes of the image, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all of these kingdoms and it shall stand forever.

“You saw also the stone, cut out without hands, that crashed upon the feet of the image, throwing it to the ground and crushing it to powder, God is telling the king what is coming to pass upon the earth. The dream is certain and the interpretation sure.”

Let me tell you in simpler words what the dream meant.

The image was a picture or an illustration of the four kingdoms that were to come upon the earth.

The head of gold represented the first world empire of Babylon over which king Nebuchadnezzar reigned at the time of his dream.

The breasts and arms of silver represented the kingdom of the Medes and Persians which overthrew the Babylonian kingdom.

The body and thighs of brass were an illustration of the Grecian Empire which in course of time arose to the place of ruler of the world.

Last of all the body and two iron legs pictured the Roman Empire which was divided into two parts. The ten toes of iron and clay tell of the ten kingdoms yet to come, part of which are monarchies, like iron, and part ruled by the people, like the clay.

Anyone who reads history knows that this dream has been literally fulfilled up to a certain point in the kingdoms of the world as they followed one another.

Let us notice the materials of the image.

First, the gold, then the silver, brass and iron. They increase in strength but decrease in quality. Was not that true of these world empires?

But what about the stone cut out without hands, which struck the image and totally destroyed it?

This stone is Jesus Christ, who will come again the second time when the ten kingdoms represented by the ten toes of the image are in power. How do we know this? Because the Bible says, **“in the days of these kings shall the stone strike.”** How do we know the stone is Jesus Christ? Who else could fill the whole world as He will fill it with His power and might and glory?

Why will He come with such destroying power? Because of sin. The world has turned against Him and the great salvation He gave to us when He died upon the cross.

It has denied His Word and scoffed at His name. All of this will come to pass after the Lord Jesus has taken His saved ones out of the world.

The time of His coming will end Gentile world power which began when God gave Judah into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar and continues to this day.

When Daniel finished telling the king his dream and its meaning, Nebuchadnezzar was so thrilled that he fell down upon his face and worshipped Daniel and commanded the servants to bring rich perfume for him and also to offer sacrifices in his name.

Knowing Daniel as we do, we are sure that he was greatly embarrassed by all of this attention and firmly objected to it, but I am sure Daniel was glad when the king said,

“It is true that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could tell me the secret of my forgotten dream.”

He was so pleased with all Daniel told him about the dream and its meaning that he not only made him a great man and appointed him ruler over the province of Babylon and chief of the governors over all of the wise men, but also gave him wonderful gifts.

I can see Daniel, blushing crimson with so much attention, standing before the king and the court, but his mind was with his three friends with whom he had prayed the night before and whose prayers, with his own, God had so graciously answered.

I think Daniel hesitated for a moment and then, after thanking the king for all of the favors given to him, he very modestly said,

“O king, live forever! I have but one request to make.”

“Say on, Daniel, anything you want is yours.”

“I’d like my three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be promoted, too.”

And the king set them over the affairs of the province of Babylon but Daniel sat in the gate of the king, that is, he was the chief-officer in the palace, the king’s counsellor and nearest adviser.

Daniel and his companions had a great God in whom they put their faith. God did not disappoint them. He never fails one who trusts Him fully. Daniel’s God is your God and my God if we will but believe in Him with all our hearts.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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