

The Kingdom of God on Earth - 6

The 2nd book of Chronicles records how Jerusalem's last king, Zedekiah did evil in the sight of the Lord his God, hardened his heart against turning to the Lord God of Israel. In addition the leaders of the priests and the people turned to idolatry and adopted pagan practices.

When God sent warnings to them, they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy. In response to their obstinacy God brought against them Nebuchadnezzar king of the Chaldeans. He killed many of their people and took the remainder captive, where they became servants to him and the kings who followed until the reign of the kingdom of Persia - 2 Chronicles 36.

During the captivity there arose four godly, intelligent young men of Israel, Daniel and his three friends, who were promoted by the king to high positions in the court of Babylon. It was at this time that the king received his vivid and shocking dream. Convinced that the dream contained an important divine message, the king immediately summoned the chief doctors of his pagan religion to explain and interpret it for him.

As often occurs after a dream, the king was unable to recount its details,. But he was clever enough to expect that if these men were as discerning and perceptive as they claimed, then they would be able to correctly describe the dream, and he would immediately recognize their account to be true. More importantly, he could then be confident in their interpretation of it.

When these men replied, "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....there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods," the enraged king immediately commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed - Daniel 2:10.

Daniel, hearing that he and his three friends were included in the king's sentence, and understanding the reason for it, turned to God in prayer. Daniel needed to know what the dream was and what was its meaning. "Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision." With so many lives at stake, Daniel immediately informed the commander of the king's guard, who brought Daniel before the king.

Daniel's first words were to disavow any personal talent or skill in what he was going to tell the king. "There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days" - Daniel 2:28. The vision encompasses and summarizes events from Nebuchadnezzar's time and culminates in the "latter days," an expression used in Scripture to describe the end times in which we are now living.

Daniel described the dream to the king. A towering human image of great size and imposing appearance loomed into view. Suddenly a stone, appearing to be cut out of an adjoining mountain, came hurtling down and struck the image with such violent force, that it crashed to the ground, and was smashed into pieces. The stone, increasing in size as it rolled among these fragments, ground them to powder, which the wind blew away. Then the stone went on growing until it became a huge mountain which filled the whole earth.

And so the king recognized that was his dream - "an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance...You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image..."