

Lessons 4-5

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Fiery Furnace: Chapters 2-3

STUDY GUIDE

1. We move now into the second section of Daniel. Stop and think through the content of these chapters (2-6) and review the theme of this section. Be sure to do this before you go on.
2. In each of these chapters, the heathen king is brought low and Jehovah and His servants are exalted. Be on the lookout through these chapters to see the things that God uses to do that. Read 2:1-13 and get the facts clearly in mind. Notice the two possible renderings of verse 5. What is the difference in meaning between the two? How difficult is it? Mark two verses in this chapter that give two opinions on this.
3. Now read 2:14-30 to get Daniel's response to the problem. What does he do first? Does verse 16 indicate "brass" on his part? What does he do next? Note carefully the content of his praise (vs.20-23). Note Daniel's attitude as he stood before the king.
4. The dream is given in verses 31-35 and the interpretation in vs. 36-45. Look at this now not for the meaning of the dream but as the answer to the problem of 1-13. From where does the answer come? What was the result of this? Study this passage carefully, listing specific effects as you can find.
5. Now read 3:1-7. What does Nebuchadnezzar do? Any connection between this and the dream of chapter 2? (see 2:31, 32, 36-38). Did he learn the lesson of chapter 2? What problem arises in vs. 8-23? Mark definite indications of the difficulty of this problem. How was this problem solved? (vs.24-27)
6. Study verses 28-30 carefully for the effect. List the specific results. What has God used in both cases to humble the heathen king?
7. Think back over chapters 2 and 3 and list any principles that would be applicable to the Lord's servants today.

NOTES

In moving to chapter two, we begin the second section of the book of Daniel. Chapter 2 contains the events concerning the first vision of Nebuchadnezzar.

In verse five, Nebuchadnezzar demands that the Chaldeans make known to him the dream and interpretation. Looking at verse nine, we would have to question whether the king had forgotten the dream, or if he was seeking to test the conjurers, magicians, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans. The wise men, as we can see, are not true prophets or they would have been able to reveal this to the king. These men themselves admitted that they do not have the divine power of discernment as seen in verse eleven when they said, "no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh." When the order went out to kill the wise men of the kingdom, including Daniel and his friends, Daniel asked for time to declare the interpretation to the king. Daniel and his friends sought God to reveal the vision to Daniel, and this came in a night dream and Daniel praised God.

We can conclude that Daniel and his friends were not in the presence of the king when it was first asked of the wise men to interpret the dream. In verse 13, we see that they had to look for Daniel and his friends. If he had been in the presence of the king at the first request, he would have been there in the court. In verse 16, we again note that Daniel had to go to the king to seek permission indicating that he was not in the court, (See verse 25 also).

Daniel first goes to Arioch, the high authority, and learns of the exact situation. Then he makes his appeal directly to the king. His 3 friends join him in prayer and God exercises Daniel's gift by revealing to him the dream and its

interpretation. It would have been presumption for any others to undertake this task. (Romans 12:3).

It is important to note the praise of Daniel to God for revealing the dream and its meaning to him, verses 20-23. Daniel sees all things as being in the divine power of God. We see in verse 28 that Daniel makes known to the king the powers of God so that He and not Daniel will be glorified.

We see, in the search for the dream and its meaning, the sovereignty of God in its revealing and in the dream itself. The dream could not be presented by someone who did not understand the sovereignty of God as Daniel spoke, "You, O King, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory," verse 37.

The answer of the vision was given from God. In this, the magicians, etc. were discredited for the power they claimed to possess and Daniel and his friends were exalted and blessed, thereby God was exalted. Daniel and his friends were promoted and given gifts by the king. The king also saw the glory of God and declared, "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery".

Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold (in the plain of Dura) and ordered that when the music was sounded, everyone was to bow down to the image or fall down and worship it. This follows the image, which he had dreamed in chapter two and is more than likely related. God had given Nebuchadnezzar authority and it would seem that he wanted everyone to see that he was blessed of God so that they should worship such a man. The image wasn't perhaps of Nebuchadnezzar, but symbolic of him and the vision nonetheless.

Along with the image and the order to worship came the results: if you refused, the fiery furnace. Daniel's friends, however, were certainly not going to worship an image or god of Nebuchadnezzar. Therefore, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown in the furnace bound and tied. When Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace he saw not three men loosed and walking around, but four and he described the fourth as "like the son of the gods." When the three came out of the furnace, they did not even have the smell of fire on them.

A decree was issued by the king of Babylon that any people, nation, or tongue who speaks anything offensive of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be torn limb from limb and their house reduced to a rubbish heap. This order of exaltation of God is of great significance. Imagine if a world ruler were to do that today. God worked through his servants to reveal himself to the king. The king saw their dedication unto death and their deliverance and saw the glory of God through their commitment.