



STORY

Daniel - Daniel 1-2

7/31/03

TEACHER PRAYER

O Lord, You have taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom Come." You have thereby taught us to petition the Holy Spirit for growth of faith in Christ and love towards all. But you have also taught us to pray for Your final victory over all the Kingdom of the world.

VOCABULARY

Kingdom- not a local or static concept, but His worldwide regal rule in the hearts of believers and the nations.

OUTER AIM

Earthly kingdoms rise and fall; The KINGDOM OF GOD destroys all earthly kingdoms and shall stand forever.

INNER AIM

Although our nation and all nations will one day be destroyed, we are believers and members of the Kingdom of God and so shall live forever.

BACKGROUND

1. The setting for the book of Daniel is the time of indignation, of judgment upon Israel. The Ten Northern Tribes had been destroyed and deported. The judgments, announced by Jeremiah, were about to fall on Judah.
2. There is always mercy in the midst of judgment. The Jews tended to identify the KINGDOM OF GOD with the nation of Israel. When Judah and Jerusalem with the temple fell, it appeared as though the KINGDOM was being destroyed.
3. Note that there were three deportations--at the time of Jehoakim (II Chron. 36:5-8). Daniel and his three friends were beneficiaries of that first deportation. The second under Jehoiachin (II Chron.36:9-10) Ezekiel was the beneficiary of that deportation. Final deportation occurred under Zedekiah--586. Daniel, his friends, and Ezekiel were spared the horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. The man who bestowed these blessings was the same man who was the instrument of judgment upon Israel. While the KINGDOM seemed to be destroyed, the destroyer was the agent for the "underground" onward march of the KINGDOM--Nebuchadnezzar.

Themes:

- You're never too young or too old to bear witness to your faith!
- Teenagers: Use Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as role models.
- God always tests the faith of His own.

STUDENT PRAYER

Lord, send me Your Holy Spirit that I may grow in grace and knowledge.

PRESENTATION

Chapter 1 - Confessing: Daniel made a great confession as he took the initiative by taking his case to the chief of the eunuchs who passed it on to his steward. The steward approved a ten-day trial of a menu of vegetables and water.

Daniel and his friends appeared more healthy than the young men who had dined at the king's table. Note the character traits of Daniel--always a gentleman, humble, gracious, honest, sociable, able to project himself without tooting his own horn.

Chapter 2 - Nebuchadnezzar's Dream - The learned members of Nebuchadnezzar's cabinet, all of whom were spiritual quacks, were unable to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, especially since he did not tell them his dream. (There is a difference of opinion as to whether Nebuchadnezzar forgot his dream or simply would not reveal it in order to get a true interpretation of the dream.) Nebuchadnezzar's most learned men declared it to be impossible for anyone to interpret a dream without knowing what the dream is, v 10. The demand of Nebuchadnezzar and the response of his learned men reveal the bankruptcy of heathenism. Nebuchadnezzar's solution: execute all his wise men on the grounds of their ignorance.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream revealed and interpreted--Daniel and his friends were under the death sentence, but Daniel requested time through Arioch. Note again Daniel's relationship with people in high places in Nebuchadnezzar's government. Note also how the Lord moved Arioch to heed the request of Daniel. Arioch no doubt knew that Nebuchadnezzar was more interested in learning the interpretation of the dream than in executing his wise men. Daniel and his friends took the matter to the Lord in prayer.

The Lord revealed the secret. Daniel glorified and thanked his God, vs. 20-23. Arioch brought Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, claiming that he had found a man among the captives who could interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Daniel again gave all glory and thanks to his God. Through the dream the Lord God would reveal the fate of the kingdoms of this world and their final destruction by the KINGDOM OF GOD. This flow of history was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in the form of a great colossus. The head of gold--the neo-Babylonian Empire, the breast and arms of silver--the Medo-Persian Empire, the belly and thighs of bronze--the Grecian Empire, the legs and feet of iron/clay, the Roman Empire. Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom were represented by the head of gold. Subsequent kingdoms were represented by parts of the colossus. (It would be good to have a map available at this point to show the locations of the nations mentioned here.)

Then there appeared a stone, cut without hands which struck the image and destroyed it completely. STONE--see Ps.118:22 and Isaiah 28:16--the KINGDOM OF GOD, which became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Earthly kingdoms rise and fall; The KINGDOM OF GOD destroys all earthly kingdoms and shall stand forever.

APPLICATIONS

- The United States of America is the mightiest kingdom on the face of the earth at this time in history, but it's an earthly kingdom and doomed to destruction.
- As one empire replaced a former, the Lord was preparing His Kingdom, Daniel 2:44.
- Comfort--the Lord is always in complete control! Therefore "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the KINGDOM," Luke 12:32.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Luke 17:20-21 - The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, "See here!" or "See there!" For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.

Ps. 2:4 - He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision.

HYMN CHOICES

Crown Him with Many Crowns - TLH #341

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God - TLH #262