

#5 - Standing Up in a Smackdown World

9/21/2008 - Jim Johnson/Daniel 2-31-49

The book of Daniel was written by Daniel himself (8:15; 8:27; 9:2) in about 536 B.C. Therefore when Daniel spoke about matters in Babylon, he was writing about current events but when he wrote of events beyond 536 B.C. he was writing prophetically. This is important to understand as we come to Daniel 2:31-49. In the first part of the chapter, King Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream. In the latter part Daniel reveals and interprets it.

A. The _____ - 31-35

He dreamed of a large and splendid statue and each portion of it was made of a different kind of metal. A head made of fine gold, chest and arms made of silver; belly & thighs made of bronze; legs made of iron and the feet and toes were of a mixture of iron and clay. (31-33) - A cut stone then emerged which no human craftsman had ever touched. The stone flew and then struck the feet of the statue and crushed them then the whole statue fell & disintegrated. The wind picked up the dust and removed it so that there was no evidence there was ever a statue. - The remaining stone grew in its size. It swelled up and became a great mountain. It continued to grow and then filled the entire earth. (34-35)

The Dream: The Babylonian _____

B. The _____ 36-45

1. The head of gold signifies the _____ Empire (36-38)

Daniel clearly identified the King and His Kingdom as being the head of gold. Babylon was known as the golden city mostly because gold was profusely used to decorate her public buildings.

2. The silver chest and arms signify the Medo-_____ Empire. (39)

In 539 BC the Medo-Persians would ransack the Babylonian empire and install Darius as their king. Though their empire was larger than Babylon, it was inferior as to quality of her government.

3. The bronze belly and thighs signify the _____ Empire. (39)

Alexander the Great rallied the armies of Greece and led them against the superior forces of the Medo-Persian Empire and defeated. This empire endured from 331 – 63 BC.

4. The legs of iron signify the _____ Empire. (40)

Rome swept through the world and opened Greece. The iron legions of Rome demolished all resistance. Rome ruled the world from 63 B.C.– 476 A.D.

This dream was all about the succession of empires who would control the nation of Israel in the future. Israel had been an autonomous nation until taken into captivity by Babylon. They would remain a subdued nation throughout the succession of empires.

Though Daniel was prophetically looking forward at these successive Kingdoms – 2500 years later we are able to look backwards and understand them as history. BUT as we read on, Daniel goes beyond our day and into what is still the future for us.

5. The iron and clay feet signify _____ Roman government. (41)

The Roman Empire, in its organized form came to an end in 476 A.D. with the barbarian invasions but Scripture seems to view this empire as continuing in a disorganized form (a divided kingdom with multiple kings as in verse 41 (also 44). Though they would coexist, they would not adhere to one another as in verse 43 (much like baked clay mixed with iron is unnatural and uncomfortable). Think of modern day Europe.

6. The 10 toes of iron and clay feet signify a _____ Roman Empire 41-43)

The statue ends with 10 toes which suggests that in the future some form of the Roman Empire will be reformed and be recomposed of ten Kingdoms.

7. The uncut stone signifies the Kingdom of _____.

The stone represented God's intrusion into history and the establishment of His Kingdom. This Kingdom will crush and put an end to all the others and then endure forever. Jesus is this stone. He was the stone that the builders rejected. This stone was cut from a mountain. (Zec 8:3) The little nation of Israel will reemerge as the seat of power for Messiah and become greater than all the other empires of the earth.

The Interpretation: The Eventual _____ of God's Kingdom over all others.

C. The _____ - 46-49

The King was awestruck – He fell down before Daniel and did homage. He then gave order to present offerings to him and burn incense before him as if Daniel were a god. (46) the King praised Daniel's God. He was being drawn to the God through his servant Daniel. (47) - Because of his performance and his honesty he was elevated and made ruler over the whole province of Babylon and put in charge of all the king's advisors.

The Impact: The Humiliation of the King and the _____ of His servant.

APPLICATION

The king planned to execute the advisors who lied to him while he elevated Daniel for being honest with him. And yet Daniel's interpretation reflected poorly on the king and indicated that he and his dynasty would be overthrown and forgotten. Daniel was not a typical advisor. He feared the Lord and he revealed the dream and its interpretation exactly as God had given it to him and he was honored for it.

The person who speaks the truth secures the _____ of their superiors

If we are to stand in our Smackdown world we too need to be honest, even with our superiors. We should do it privately, gently and with great respect, but we should be honest above all. There's little to lose and everything to gain.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. How would you have handled Daniel's dilemma when he had to give the King terrible news about his future?
2. When is it toughest for you to be honest with others?
3. What is there about Daniel's attitude that might help you with yours?