

# KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR

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*So, you must submit to Babylon's king and serve him; put your neck under Babylon's yoke! I will punish any nation that refuses to be his slave, says the Lord. I will send war, famine, and disease upon that nation until Babylon has conquered it. (Jeremiah 27:8, NLT)*

## Who was he:

- Was king of Babylon from 605-562 B.C.
- Considered the greatest of all the Babylonian kings.
- Built most of Babylon including the Hanging Gardens considered one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.
- Died in 562 B.C. succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach (2 Kings 25:27).
- King Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned in the Old Testament books of 2 Kings 24-25, 2 Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 21-52 and Daniel 1-4.
- Contemporaries: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel.

## The Warrior King:

- In 605 B.C. allows King Jehoiakim (king Josiah's son) to rule as the puppet king. Jehoiakim surrendered and paid him tribute for three years but then rebelled and withheld his pledge. (2 Kings 24:1)
- In 597 B.C. the Babylonians plundered the city including the temple and took 10,000 captives including Ezekiel the prophet, King Jehoiachin and his family and other Jewish leaders. (2 Kings 24:12-16)
- 586 B.C: Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem completely. He took King Zedekiah and his sons' captive, killed his sons while he watched, then gouged out his eyes and took him to Babylon as a captive along with others. (2 Kings 25:1-2)

## First dream: The statue

The king's dream depicted a massive, terrifying statue. The statue had a head made of gold, chest and arms of silver, stomach and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet made of mixed iron and clay. A rock cut from a mountain but not by human hands strikes the statue on its feet smashing it. The statue was crushed into small pieces which were blew away by the wind. The rock became a great mountain that covered the whole earth. (Daniel 2:31-35).

## Interpretation:

- Nebuchadnezzar asked his magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers, to tell him his dream and its interpretation.
- Gold head symbolizes Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon 606-539 B.C.
- Silver chest and arms represents Persian Empire 539-331 B.C.
- Bronze stomach and thighs Greek Empire 331-323 B.C.
- Iron & clay legs and feet Roman Empire 322 B.C - A.D 476.
- The statue is destroyed by a great stone which represents Jesus Christ. (Daniel 2:47)

## The blazing furnace:

- He commands the building of a large golden statue 90ft tall and 9ft wide. (Daniel 3:1-2).
- The king commands everyone to bow down and worship his statue upon hearing a musical cue. (Daniel 3:3-7).
- The Babylonians practiced polytheism which is the belief or worship of more than one god.
- Nebuchadnezzar wasn't asking them to renounce their god by bowing down to his statue.

*But there are some Jews Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego whom you have put in charge of the province of Babylon. They pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up. (Daniel 3:12, NLT)*

*"Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god!" (Daniel 3:25, NLT)*

## Second dream: The tree

The king had a second dream in which he saw a large tree increasing in size reaching high into the heavens. The wild animals and birds shaded and sheltered by it and the entire world fed from this tree.

A messenger appeared coming down from heaven and shouted cut down the tree and scatter its fruit and chase the wild animals from its branches.

Only the stump was to be left bound with a band of iron and bronze.



The tree represented a man who would be given the mind of a wild animal and remain in this condition for a time of seven periods. (Daniel 4:10-17)

#### Interpretation of the dream:

- The tree stood for a man, who was Nebuchadnezzar.
- You will live like a wild animal eating grass for seven periods.
- The destruction, however was not total, for the tree was ordered banded about with iron and brass. This was done in the ancient world to stop the stump from splitting and making it possible for the tree to grow back. Meaning that you will receive your kingdom back when you have learnt that heaven rules.
- Daniel urged Nebuchadnezzar to stop sinning and do what is right in a bid to prevent this disaster from becoming reality. (Daniel 4:19-27)

#### Pride of a king:

Twelve months after the dream the king is relaxing on his roof and he had an arrogant boast. (Daniel 4:30-32)

#### The punishment of a king:

He would suffer seven periods of insanity for his pride. The mental illness he suffered from is known as zoanthropy or lycanthropy. (Daniel 4:31-33)

#### Praise for the true king:

*After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honoured the one who lives forever. His rule is everlasting, and his kingdom is eternal.* (Daniel 4:34, NLT)

Nebuchadnezzar humbles himself and his reason returns, he regained his kingdom and his reputation is returned.

*"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honour the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and he is able to humble the proud."* (Daniel 4:37, NLT)

#### What was his significance in Jesus' genealogy?

Nebuchadnezzar is not listed in the genealogy of Jesus found in Matthew 1 directly but he is referenced in it:

*Josiah was the father of Jehoiachin and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon).* (Matthew 1:11, NLT)

#### Lessons we can learn from King Nebuchadnezzar life:

1. By my own mighty power:

After Daniel explained what the dream meant to Nebuchadnezzar, he did not heed the warning. Instead, he boasts saying look at this great city of Babylon I have built by my own mighty power. (Daniel 4:30)

2. Genuine over fake:

Our lives will be affected by the quality of the people we listen to.

3. Stirred not changed:

King Nebuchadnezzar was stirred but there was no change in his life because if there was, he would have listened to Daniel when he interpreted the second dream. (Daniel 2:46-47)

4. Wait and see:

*I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power?"* (Daniel 3:15, NLT)

*If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.* (Daniel 3:17-18, NLT)

*Therefore, I make this decree: If any people, whatever their race or nation or language, speak a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they will be torn limb from limb, and their houses will be turned into heaps of rubble. There is no other god who can rescue like this!"* (Daniel 3:29, NLT)

#### Conclusion

*Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. Wealth and honour come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength.* (1 Chronicles 29:11-12, NLT)

No matter how brilliant or how successful we are, God still reigns, He is still in control of everything. Let us learn from the life of Nebuchadnezzar to give God the glory He deserves. To thank Him for everything He has given us. To give Him the praise He deserves even if He does not rescue us from the furnace, we are in.