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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2344 ~ Daniel Tells the Future.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Around 605 BC, the most powerful man on earth was King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylonia. He ruled the whole world at that given time, and controlled the different people groups from all the countries he'd conquered. Among those people taken to his home city of Babylon were the most important people from the Jewish nation of Judah. Among them were four young royal men, who were chosen and trained in the local language and culture of Babylonia. These young men were called Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and although being given the names of the Babylonian gods, they'd decided to keep honouring their own God by not worshipping the idol pagan gods of Babylon.

One night, King Nebuchadnezzar had a vivid dream but by morning, he couldn't remember what it was about, even though he'd longed to know what it'd meant. So the king called for his wise men and counsellors to ask them to tell him what he had dreamt, but they couldn't tell him his dream. Many times they'd faked the advice they'd given to the king and the king now suspected as much. So he ordered all his wise men and counsellors be put in prison and then punished by death.

Daniel and his three friends weren't with the counsellors who'd been put in prison but when they found out what had happened, Daniel went straight to the king and asked for some time to pray and ask his God to reveal to him what the dream was and its interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar agreed to this. That night, God graciously answered the prayers of Daniel and his friends and they praised Him for the answer. The next morning, Daniel went to the king to tell him what God had shown him. When Daniel told the king what his dream had been, the king still didn't understand it, so he asked Daniel to explain what it all meant.

DRAMA - The Bible In Living Sound.

The interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream is recorded in the book of *Daniel*, Chapter 2. Nebuchadnezzar's statue had a head of gold, which represented King Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom. He was an absolute ruler and no king in history had outdone him in glory and power. However, with each succeeding kingdom after King Nebuchadnezzar, the powers of the world-wide ruler became less and less, while the last kingdoms remained much longer than the kingdoms that had gone before. The Babylonian kingdom only lasted until it was conquered by an inferior kingdom in 539 BC, led by King Cyrus of the Medes and Persian Empire. At that time, the Persian Empire covered most of modern-day Iran.

The Persian Kingdom was then conquered by the Greek Empire in 330 BC, under the rulership of Alexander the Great. Alexander died in 323 BC when he was only 33 years old and his kingdom was torn apart by civil wars, resulting in a division of his empire between his four generals.

However, wherever Alexander had conquered other nations, he had the Greek language taught in schools set up in the cities of those nations. Greek thus became the world language of the time and for centuries afterwards. Much of the New Testament was written in the Greek language of that period and the widespread use of Greek helped in the sharing of the gospel from India to Spain after Jesus Christ had returned to heaven. The Greek Empire, however, came to an end in 146 BC.

The fourth kingdom was the Roman Empire, led by its first dictator, Julius Caesar. Julius Caesar was recognised as a ruler in 44 BC. By then, he'd fought wars all across the then-known world, bringing city states and regions under the rulership of Rome. Following his assassination, Caesar Augustus was then declared the first Emperor of the Roman Empire. Augustus ruled from 31 BC to 14 AD and his rule brought in more than 200 years of peace, something that hadn't previously been known in those times.

Why do we need to know all this history of the non-Jewish world as fulfilled from the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon? In Luke's Gospel, Chapter 2, Caesar Augustus sent out a decree that all the people of the Roman Empire were to be registered for tax purposes. This decree took place four years before Jesus Christ was born. The proud Jewish people at that time resented anything Roman and especially more taxes for Caesar. So the Jews sent a delegation to Rome to protest this. Communications were slow but eventually, the delegation failed and the Jewish people were made to enrol and pay a Roman tax. The official tax collectors worked their way through province after province and town by town. Mary, the mother of Jesus, travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem with her husband, Joseph, to register there because they were descendants of King David. While they were in Bethlehem, baby Jesus was born. The Bible is a book full of true historical events!

When the Roman Empire was at its height around 117 AD, it was the most extensive political and social structure in western civilisation. The influence of the Roman Empire was profound in its lasting contributions to almost every aspect of western culture. However, it was a kingdom divided between rich and poor, and master and slave, as shown by the statue's feet being made partly of iron and partly of clay. By 285 AD, the Roman Empire had grown too vast to be ruled from the central government in Rome. So it was divided into Eastern and Western empires. The Eastern Empire was known as the Byzantine Empire until the city of Constantinople in the Istanbul province of Turkey fell in 1453 AD to the Ottoman Turks.

The Western Empire fell to a German king in 476 AD and its power was taken back by the Roman Catholic Church in Rome. The leaders of this network were called and today, are still known as 'popes'. Some of those popes interfered in the politics of other countries. In the last book of the Bible, called *The Revelation of Jesus Christ,* the Lord Jesus Himself gave the Apostle John, in chapters 2 and 3, descriptions of seven churches. These churches were all located in Asia or present-day Turkey. Scholars believe that these church predictions span the roughly 2,000 years of church history since the birth of Christ.

These churches are listed as Ephesus – the loveless church, Smyrna – the persecuted church, Pergamos – the compromising church and Thyatira – the corrupted church. The Roman church had become so corrupt that in 1517, a priest named Martin Luther wrote out a list of 95 causes for complaint against the church and nailed it to the door of the church in Wittenberg, a university town in eastern Germany. His stand against the abuses of the Roman church caused people in all parts of Europe to move away from the control of the Roman church to form their own churches as part of a Protestant Reformation. In this year of 2017, there'll be re-enactments of this reformation to mark the 500-year anniversary since Luther did this. (And in case you're wondering about the other three churches that Jesus spoke of in *Revelation*, they are Sardis – the dead church, Philadelphia – the faithful church and Laodicea – the lukewarm church).

Nebuchadnezzar's dream describes the series of kingdoms from a human perspective. The last Gentile (or non-Jewish) kingdom will be destroyed by God's kingdom as it's established on earth with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as its ruler. Daniel's vision during the night in Chapter 7 of his book *Daniel*, also describes the same kingdoms from God's perspective. This time, these kingdoms appear as a series of vicious beasts.

After having all this explained to him, King Nebuchadnezzar fell down before Daniel with the realisation that the power of the one true God was at work within Daniel. This of course didn't mean that Nebuchadnezzar was converted to honouring God Almighty or that he gave up any of his other pagan gods. It only meant that the king knew he had come up against a power that was greater than his own, and that he admitted this. In the New Testament book of James, Chapter 2, it says: "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble!" This means that a person has to have more than a little knowledge of the Bible and the one true God of heaven. To be a true Christian means to have a bonded relationship with God's Son, Jesus Christ, by excluding all other gods and selfish ambitions.

If there's ever a time to be talking to family, relatives and friends about salvation from sin through the Lord Jesus, now is the time. The description of hell, where all unsaved people will go, is shown in the Scriptures as a never-ending place of darkness, terror and torment. It's truly frightening to be separated from God's presence! No one would hold onto their rebellion against God if they realised how much it will cost them in the end by refusing to worship God and His Son. Pray for revival to break out anywhere in the world where faithful believers in Jesus are praying for God's presence to reside there. For in 2nd Chronicles, Chapter 7, Verse 14, it says: "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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