

Bible Study – Daniel

Week 6 – Chapter 4

I. Pride

- a. Proverbs 6:16-19, 8:13, 11:2, 16:5, 16:18, 21:4, 29:23
- b. James 4:13-16
- c. Acts 12: 20-23

II. Daniel 4:1-3

King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages that live throughout the earth: May you have abundant prosperity! ² The signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me I am pleased to recount. ³ How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his sovereignty is from generation to generation.

- A. The events of this chapter probably happened around 25-30 years after Chapter 3. This would be consistent with observations made by two Babylonians Abydenus (2nd century BC) and Beosus (3rd century BC priest). Daniel did not record the time frame himself.
- B. Likely Daniel would have been around 50 years Old at this time.
- C. The Book begins in the first person, being written by Nebuchadnezzar himself.
- D. God performed 3 miracles for Nebuchadnezzar that are recorded. (1) His eschatological dream, (2) The Fiery Furnace, (3) The punishment he receives in chapter 4
- E. Babylon ruled the known world, thus the reason for the King's address
- F. Nebuchadnezzar seems to be speaking as a saved man. The events that follow showed clearly to the King that it is no one else but Yahweh that is the true God, not the Babylonian gods or even himself.

III. Daniel 4:4-9

⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living at ease in my home and prospering in my palace. ⁵ I saw a dream that frightened me; my fantasies in bed and the visions of my head terrified me. ⁶ So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, in order that they might tell me the interpretation of the dream. ⁷ Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the diviners came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not tell me its interpretation. ⁸ At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and who is endowed with a spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream: ⁹ “O

Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that you are endowed with a spirit of the holy gods and that no mystery is too difficult for you. Hear the dream that I saw; tell me its interpretation.

- A. Another reason to think that this happened 25-30 years after chapter 3 is the King's references to peace and prosperity. Egypt had been defeated and there were no other major threats to Babylon. These events must have happened after all the major wars concluded.
- B. Again the wise men of Babylon were called in to interpret a dream for the King. But they could not interpret the dream. Despite all their proclaimed knowledge on the subject, God kept the understanding from them.
- C. Daniel came in later. He separated himself from the original council the wise men gave.
 - a. It could have been that Daniel was only summoned when the rest of the wise men couldn't handle the situation.
 - b. Daniel might have just delayed himself to show the difference between the Pagan wise men and the power of God within him.
- D. Daniel is addressed by the name Belteshazzar and the King says, "the name of my god". He may have been referring to the fact that he was still pagan at that time or that his name reflected the gods of Babylon.
- E. Nebuchadnezzar understood that there was a special power in Daniel, and that Daniel would be able to help him.
- F. Daniel must have done an acceptable job as a wise man, given that he is still the chief among them after 30 years.

IV. Daniel 4:10-18

Upon my bed this is what I saw; there was a tree at the center of the earth, and its height was great. ¹¹The tree grew great and strong, its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the ends of the whole earth. ¹²Its foliage was beautiful, its fruit abundant, and it provided food for all. The animals of the field found shade under it, the birds of the air nested in its branches, and from it all living beings were fed. ¹³I continued looking, in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and there was a holy watcher, coming down from heaven. ¹⁴He cried aloud and said: 'Cut down the tree and chop off its branches, strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from beneath it and the birds from its branches. ¹⁵But leave its stump and roots in the ground, with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let him be bathed with the dew of heaven, and let his lot be with the animals of the field in the grass of the earth. ¹⁶Let his mind be changed from that of a human, and let the mind of an animal be given to him. And let seven times pass over him. ¹⁷The sentence is rendered by decree of the watchers, the decision is given by order of the holy ones, in order that all who live may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of mortals; he gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of human beings.' ¹⁸This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are unable to tell me the interpretation. You are able, however, for you are endowed with a spirit of the holy gods."

- A. The Holy water is an Angel.
- B. In verse 15 the description changes from the tree to a man.
- C. How long is a “Time”
 - a. Daniel 7:25

V. Daniel 4:19

¹⁹ Then Daniel, who was called Belteshazzar, was severely distressed for a while. His thoughts terrified him. The king said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or the interpretation terrify you.” Belteshazzar answered, “My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you, and its interpretation for your enemies!”

- A. Changes to 3rd person
- B. Daniel is physically shaken here by the dream he has just heard. So much so that the King even offers comfort to Daniel.
- C. Daniel knew immediately what the dream meant and told the King that he wished the dream was meant for his enemies because it was so horrible.

VI. Daniel 4:20-27

²⁰ The tree that you saw, which grew great and strong, so that its top reached to heaven and was visible to the end of the whole earth, ²¹ whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and which provided food for all, under which animals of the field lived, and in whose branches the birds of the air had nests—
²² it is you, O king! You have grown great and strong. Your greatness has increased and reaches to heaven, and your sovereignty to the ends of the earth. ²³ And whereas the king saw a holy watcher coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the ground, with a band of iron and bronze, in the grass of the field; and let him be bathed with the dew of heaven, and let his lot be with the animals of the field, until seven times pass over him’—
²⁴ this is the interpretation, O king, and it is a decree of the Most High that has come upon my lord the king: ²⁵ You shall be driven away from human society, and your dwelling shall be with the wild animals. You shall be made to eat grass like oxen, you shall be bathed with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, until you have learned that the Most High has sovereignty over the kingdom of mortals, and gives it to whom he will. ²⁶ As it was commanded to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be re-established for you from the time that you learn that Heaven is sovereign. ²⁷ Therefore, O king, may my counsel be acceptable to you: atone for your sins with righteousness, and your iniquities with mercy to the oppressed, so that your prosperity may be prolonged.”

- A. The tree was Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom.
- B. The Angel ordered the tree cut down and the stump bound. This indicated that the King would have the opportunity to regain his throne.
- C. The King was going to be driven away from men and into madness.
- D. The Most High God is Sovereign over the Kingdoms of Men.

- E. God was giving Nebuchadnezzar the opportunity to repent. Just as he did with Noah and the Ark or Jonah and Nineveh, God gave warning before the punishment. The King could avoid all that was prophesied if he had just submitted to God.
- F. Daniel urged the King to repent to avoid all this. Daniel was compassionate and truly cared what happened to this pagan king.

VII. Daniel 4:28-33

²⁸ All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹ At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰ and the king said, “Is this not magnificent Babylon, which I have built as a royal capital by my mighty power and for my glorious majesty?” ³¹ While the words were still in the king’s mouth, a voice came from heaven: “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: The kingdom has departed from you! ³² You shall be driven away from human society, and your dwelling shall be with the animals of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like oxen, and seven times shall pass over you, until you have learned that the Most High has sovereignty over the kingdom of mortals and gives it to whom he will.” ³³ Immediately the sentence was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven away from human society, ate grass like oxen, and his body was bathed with the dew of heaven, until his hair grew as long as eagles’ feathers and his nails became like birds’ claws.

- A. God withheld judgment on Nebuchadnezzar for an entire year. The judgment came after the King declared that he built Babylon by his glory and power.
- B. The condition that is spoken of here is Lycanthropy or Boanthropy.
 - a. Boanthropy still occurs today when a person, in a delusional state, believes himself or herself to be an ox or cow, and attempts to live and behave accordingly. A case of this was documented in 1946.
 - b. Physical characteristics described here are very similar to what happened in the 1946 case.
- C. Nothing in the official records that have been uncovered specifically reference what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. Likely because no scholar would have wanted to project the King in such a light.

VIII. Daniel 4:34-37

³⁴ When that period was over, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me. I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored the one who lives forever. For his sovereignty is an everlasting sovereignty, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation. ³⁵ All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does what he wills with the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can stay his hand or say to him, “What are you doing?” ³⁶ At that time my reason returned to me; and my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom. My counselors and my lords sought me out, I was re-established over my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are truth, and his ways are justice; and he is able to bring low those who walk in pride. ¹

- A. The text reverts back to first person.
- B. As soon as he recovered from his illness, he humbled himself and praised God.

¹ *The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Da 4:1–37.

- C. Unlike his statement in chapter 3, “What god can deliver you from my hand”, he says, “There is no one who can stay his hand or say to him, ‘What are you doing?’”.
 - a. He finally understood that God is alone Sovereign
- D. After the King repented, the Kingdom was restored to him until his death. God blessed him with even more than he had possessed before.
 - a. God honors those who honor Him.
- E. Nebuchadnezzar was now a servant of the Most High God, and had understanding that there is no one like God.
- F. The Moral Story: **for all his works are truth, and his ways are justice; and he is able to bring low those who walk in pride.**