

Daniel - Chapter four

Vs.1-3. King Nebuchadnezzar makes a proclamation 'unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth'. (All people and territories under his jurisdiction.) Here, after having witnessed God miraculously bringing the Hebrews through the much-heated fire of the furnace with no hurt, he testifies to God's greatness and power.

- This is his second decree exalting God.

Note: Nebuchadnezzar was the first of the Gentile 'world-kings'. And it was with him that the 'times of the Gentiles' began. Too, although he was a heathen king, he expressed two great doctrines of Scripture in **v.3** that too few of our day understand or acknowledge. (1) God's kingdom is to be an 'everlasting kingdom' and (2) Eternal generations of peoples will live on this earth in their 'natural bodies'.

Vs.4-9. The king has a 'second dream' having to do with prophetic events. And once again he was troubled and afraid. So he called for the 'wise men' of Babylon to make known the interpretation. And once again they failed. (In his first dream they had said, 'Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it' (2:7). Here he tells the dream, and they are still unable to give an interpretation.

- At the last, Daniel came in before the king. And Nebuchadnezzar refers to him as 'master of the magicians'. (Daniel was recognized as being greater than all the learned men and religious devotees of his day.)

- 'Magicians' actually refers to the learned scribes who copied and understood the most ancient cuneiform writings. Actually, some of this group did make use of 'magic formulas'. But the king knew that Daniel's ability to interpret dreams came from Almighty God.

Vs.10-16. The king gives particulars of the dream.

(1) A 'tree' in the midst of the earth.

- Had great height
- It grew, and was strong.
- Its height reached unto heaven.
- All peoples of the earth could see it.
- Its leaves were fair (beautiful).
- And its fruit was abundant.
- It provided food for everyone.
- Under it, the beasts of the field were sheltered.
- And in its branches the fowls of the heaven lodged.

(2) Lo! there was a guardian, a holy one, who came down from heaven and cried aloud:

- Cut down the tree.
- Lop off its branches.
- Strip off its leaves.
- And scatter its fruit.
- Let the animals flee from under it, and the birds from its branches.

(3) But leave the stump and roots in the ground, bound with hoops of iron and bronze in the grass of the field.

- Let it be wet with the dew of heaven.

- Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass (fields) of the earth.
- Let his heart be changed from that of a man to that of a beast.
- And let seven times (seasons) pass over him.

Vs.17,18. 'The purpose of this decree is that all the world may understand that the Most High dominates the kingdoms of the world, and gives them to anyone He wants to, even the lowliest of men' (Taylor).

- 'Now it is for you, Belteshazzar, to pronounce its meaning, since not one of the sages in my kingdom has been able to interpret it for me' (Jerusalem Bible).

V.19. Daniel was astonished at what God had revealed, and was troubled in his thoughts for one hour, not knowing exactly what to say. He felt for (had profound grief for) the king, the nation of Babylon, and for the welfare of his own people, the Hebrews.

- He says to the king, 'The dream concerns your enemies, and they will be the ones benefited through its results.'

Vs.20-26. Daniel interprets the dream (tree vision).

- Nebuchadnezzar, you are that 'tree in the midst of the earth' that you described.

- And the 'watcher' (holy angel from heaven) has decreed:

- You will become mentally deranged.

- They shall drive thee from men (society). Note: We're not told who 'they' might be, but they are surely not his enemies. They would have killed him.

- You will imagine yourself to be a beast, eating the grass of the field and living among the animals as one of them.

- You will be drenched by the dew of heaven until seven times (seasons) pass over thee. Note: Since there are essentially only two seasons (one wet and one dry) in that part of the world, some believe that the seven seasons were to be three and one-half years rather than seven years.

- Your living as a beast of the field will cause you to realize that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and he giveth it to whomsoever he will.

- The 'stump' left in the ground with the roots held firm by a band of iron and brass lets you know that 'your kingdom will be kept for you until you come to understand that heaven rules all' (Jerusalem Bible).

V.27. Daniel gives advice to the king.

- If the king would forsake his sins and turn to righteous living, showing compassion to the poor and needy whom he had oppressed, God would have mercy. He would not carry out what He had revealed in the dream.

Vs.28-30. The king rejected Daniel's advice.

- God, in His mercy, gave the king a full year to consider his ways and make a change for the good. Yet, he refused to repent.

- At the end of the twelve months, while walking in his palace and boasting of all that he had done in building Babylon into the great world power, the prophetic dream began to be a reality in his life.

Vs.31-33. The dream is fulfilled.

- While the king was glorifying himself his mind snapped, and he remained insane for '7 times', until he knew 'that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will' (v.32). Note: All men will one day bow and acknowledge that God is sovereign in heaven and earth.
- While with the beasts of the field, 'and his body wet with the dew of heaven, his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws' (v.33).

Vs.34-37. The king gives praise to God.

- At the end of the 'seven times' Nebuchadnezzar's understanding returned and he blessed the most High. Note: 'Seven' is a number of completion. And it was at the end of the seven seasons that the king's understanding returned. Now, not only did he understand what had happened to him, but he recognized the power, and greatness, and sovereignty of Daniel's God, the Lord God of Israel.

- Some things Nebuchadnezzar learned about the most High:

- He is to be honored by all.
- His works are truth, and his ways just.
- He is able to abase the proud.
- He is the revealer of secrets.
- He sends angels to protect those who put their trust in him.
- No other god can deliver like him.
- His kingdom is everlasting.
- His 'Spirit' can dwell within man.
- He gives rule to whomsoever he will.