

BOOK OF DANIEL
THE HUMBLING OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR
DANIEL 4

Introduction

We've previously mentioned the problem of pride in King Nebuchadnezzar's life! In Daniel 4 we have Nebuchadnezzar's account of how God had to humble him during his reign!

I. THE KING'S DREAM! (Daniel 4:1-5; 10-17)

It is thought that there is a gap of about 30 years between the events of the fiery furnace chapter and this one; possibly around the 35th year of King Nebuchadnezzar's 43 year rule. Which would place this around 570 B.C.

If that is indeed the case, then Daniel would have been about 50 years old at the time.

What we have recorded here by Daniel is an official proclamation made by Nebuchadnezzar which was circulated throughout all his realm after God dealt with him!

Daniel was led by the Holy Spirit's inspiration to include this official proclamation!

We've seen how God had previously shown the king that He is able to deliver and preserve those who trust and obey Him!
(e.g. Through the deliverance of the three Hebrew children!)

But God's revelation of Himself to Nebuchadnezzar did not conclude there! For we see that God further revealed Himself to the king through the circumstances recorded in this chapter!

Whereas earlier Nebuchadnezzar believed it was by his own power and wisdom that he had consolidated the kingdom under his authority, he learned through the events recorded in this chapter that it is God who rules according to His will and uses those that He chooses as His instruments!

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We see that God once again uses a dream in this King's life! Through the interpretation of this dream, **and** the fulfillment of this dream, King Nebuchadnezzar is taught a vital lesson in humility!

I believe God used a dream to speak to Nebuchadnezzar because the king placed so much emphasis on dreams and had a tendency to be troubled by them! God knows how to get our attention!

We see this dream that the King dreamed and it would make us wonder "*what in the world did he have on that pizza?*"!

The Scripture records that he was afraid and troubled by this dream! Well, he had good reason!

The first part of the vision of the tree (**vs 10-12**) probably would have caused Nebuchadnezzar no concern!

In fact, it **may have even produced more pride** as he recognized himself in the tree as the one who provided bountifully for the subjects in his realm!

But it was the second part of the vision (**vs 13-15a**)—that the tree was to be cut down—that must have greatly disturbed him!

The third part of the vision (**Vs 15b-16**) must have been even more terrifying if Nebuchadnezzar recognized himself as represented by the tree! That's because he could possibly see that his sanity would leave him and he would become demented, living among the animals for a period of seven years!

His suspicions of this dream not being a very good omen for him came to fruition when the purpose of this happening is revealed to him there in **vs. 17!**

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II. THE KING'S DECREE! (Daniel 4:6-9)

We see that the king goes last where he should have gone first!

Though all of the wise guys of Babylon had been discredited previously because of their inability to **tell and interpret** the king's first dream, they were once again summoned by the king to give him an interpretation! Again, they failed to give the king what he wanted, so Daniel was called!

Daniel was in a position of significant governmental authority at this time and not serving as a counselor to the king! That could explain why he was not included in the first invitation of the wise men!

III. THE KING'S DEMAND! (Daniel 4:18-19a)

We see that the king still acknowledged his own god (Bel) as he referred to Daniel by his Babylonian name, Belteshazzar, which included Bel's name!

Obviously Nebuchadnezzar was still a polytheist though he had previously acknowledged God's sovereignty!
(2:47; 3:28-29)

He wanted Daniel to give it to him straight, even if the news wasn't good!

That's a good thing because the first dream Daniel interpreted exalted the King! This second dream debased the King!

IV. THE KING'S DESTINY! (Daniel 4:19b-27)

Daniel in essence was saying, *"Well King, the folks that aren't too fond of you are really going to love this one! I only wish it was going to be on them and not you."*

It was a case of first the good news, then the bad news!

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The good news is that tree you saw that was flourishing and all that was you! The bad news is also that the tree you saw was you!

Daniel's interpretation was that the King would become a madman (i.e. insane), he would be removed from his position of authority in the kingdom, and would live in a demented state for seven years!

The fact that the stump would not be uprooted, but was secured and left in the field indicated that the king would be restored to the throne! But, that restoration would not take place until the King acknowledged God's sovereign right to rule!

Daniel concluded by exhorting the king to renounce his sins! This points out the principle that any announced judgment may be averted if there is repentance! (e.g. The city of Nineveh)

Daniel urged the king to turn from his sinful pride and produce fruits of righteousness! The acts he mentioned here are those which stem from a heart that is submissive to God! Had he done so, he would have averted his seven years of insanity!

V. THE KING'S DOWNFALL! (Daniel 4:28-32)

Daniel's interpretation and his exhortation to the king was soon forgotten and ignored!

Nebuchadnezzar continued in his sinful pride! He did not repent as Daniel had advised him to do or if he did, it was a short lived repentance! Only a year passed by before the fulfillment of the dream!

As the king, full of pride, was boasting of his accomplishments, there came a voice from heaven that began his judgment!

VI. THE KING'S DOWNSIZING! (Daniel 4:33)

It was just as Daniel had predicted! God is true to His Word! Amen!

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VII. THE KING'S DELIVERANCE! (Daniel 4:34)

When the seven years had transpired, we see the king with his sanity restored and praising the most high God!

VIII. THE KING'S DECLARATION! (Daniel 4:34b-37)

The king who had sought honor and glory for himself now acknowledges that the Most High lives forever! He confessed that God's dominion is eternal and that His kingdom endures!

He acknowledges the sovereignty of God and confesses that man is answerable to God and not God to man!

The king's acknowledgment of God's right to rule brought about the restoration of the king's sanity and a restoration of his throne!

Having been humbled by and before God, Nebuchadnezzar rose to greater heights of honor than he had known when he walked in pride!

He said he praised, extolled, and honored the King of Heaven!
The way that the sentence is constructed indicates a continued action, suggesting that the king did these things habitually!

Since the king said that these attitudes characterized his life, many have concluded that he experience regeneration! It is quite possible!
We'll find out one day!

Conclusion

Can you see how much God hates pride and self-exaltation?
(Proverbs 6:16-17)

We need to follow the example of our Saviour!
(Philippians 2:8-. . .he humbled Himself. . .)

We need heed the word of Scripture! *(James 2:10—"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He shall lift you up.")*