

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

As believers, we are commissioned to bring the gospel to all peoples.

Not just the ones we like.

Not just the ones that appear to be good people.

And not just the ones we would like to see in heaven.

However, sometimes we fail to share the gospel to certain individuals because we believe that there is no way he or she will respond to it.

I am wasting my time if I talk to that person about Jesus – he will never repent

I know the things they have done – they can't be saved.

However, we forget that the same mercy and grace that has been extended toward us – has been extended to them as well.

We forget what Peter tells us in 2 Peter 3:9 – that the Lord is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

This evening we are going to continue our study through the book of Daniel, we are going to be in one of the most important chapters in the book of Daniel.

Chapter 4 -

It contains prophesy – but that is not what makes it so important.

It contains a miracle – but that is not what makes it so important.

What makes it so important is that it contains the personal testimony of King Nebuchadnezzar's conversion.

In other words, this is the chapter where Nebuchadnezzar gets saved.

This is the chapter where Nebuchadnezzar tells the world what God has done in his life.

This is his testimony.

He is most powerful man in the world during this time.

He is prideful, he is a king that has anger issues – yet God is able to forgive him and save him.

You mean the same king who built the golden image and had everyone worship it. Yes

You mean the same king who cast Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego into the fire for not worshipping the image. Yes.

You see, no one is beyond the reach of God.

Let's pray...

Quick recap of where we stand,

In chapter one, Daniel and his friends refused to compromise and eat of the king's food – knowing that it might hinder their relationship with God.

In chapter two, King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of a huge image made out of different metals – Daniel is given the interpretation from God and he gives it to the King.

In chapter three, Nebuchadnezzar in his defiance, he builds himself an image of gold for the people to worship. Daniel's three friends only worship Yahweh and refuse to worship the golden image so the king throws them in the fire and sees another demonstration of God's power as the three were delivered.

[Dan 4:1-37 NKJV] 1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. 2 I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me. 3 How great [are] His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion [is] from generation to generation.

Nebuchadnezzar begins the chapter by proclaiming to the entire world what God has done in his life.

He is praising God!!!

No longer is he boasting about what a great ruler he is – he is humbling himself before the one true God.

There were many gods that he had worshipped – including himself.

However something changed.

And the signs and wonders that he speaks of here in verse two and three is what he saw with his own eyes.

Daniel revealing to him the dream and the interpretation in chapter two.

Daniel's three friends being delivered in the fire.

And of course, what is going to happen here in chapter four.

All of these contributed to his change of heart.

To his conversion.

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace.

I asked you to make a note of the word “rest”

This was time during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar where his empire was established.

He had finished building his palaces; he had finished conquering the lands.

We also see the word flourishing, this speaks of prospering. It speaks of everything being green.

Good times right.

However, these are dangerous times in a person's life.

Because these are the times when we forget about God and start to think that it was all because of our own doing.

Turn with me to the book of Deut –

[Deu 6:10-12 NKJV] 10 "So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, 11 "houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant--when you have eaten and are full-- 12 "[then] beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

God is warning the Israelites – in times of rest, in times where everything is green – don't forget about Me. Don't forget who delivered you.

And the Israelites did forget and they started worshipping other gods.

5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

Once again, even during this time of rest – the king has another dream.

As in chapter two.

And just like the dream he had in chapter two, it troubled him.

The word that is used here for troubled is the word for terror or fright.

6 Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise [men] of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation.

When Nebuchadnezzar has the dream in chapter two, he commands the magicians and astrologers to first tell him the dream and then interpret it.

And they said – that is impossible to do king. So he ordered them to be killed.

Here Nebuchadnezzar helps them out by telling them the dream first.

And they still could not interpret the dream.

I believe that Nebuchadnezzar knew the interpretation of the dream beforehand and so did the magician and astrologers – however, I think that they simply did not want to tell Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation because it was bad news.

8 But at last Daniel came before me (his name [is] Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him [is] the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, [saying]: 9 "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God [is] in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.

The magicians and astrologers could not interpret the dream so King Nebuchadnezzar goes to Daniel, the chief of the magicians.

Now, this doesn't mean that Daniel had adopted the art of magic while he was in Babylon. It simply means that Daniel, in following after the Lord, gained such godly wisdom from God that he rose to prominence among this group of "magicians".

Now the question is asked, why didn't Nebuchadnezzar go to Daniel first?

Nebuchadnezzar saw that the spirit of God was in Daniel, he knew that Daniel had revealed to him his dream in the past.

But, he still chose to exhaust his other options before coming to Daniel.

Much like the world today – prayer is the last resort for many instead of being the first.

10 "These [were] the visions of my head [while] on my bed: I was looking, and behold, A tree in the midst of the earth, And its height was great. 11 The tree grew and became strong; Its height reached to the heavens, And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth. 12 Its leaves [were] lovely, Its fruit abundant, And in it

[was] food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, And all flesh was fed from it. 13 "I saw in the visions of my head [while] on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. 14 He cried aloud and said thus: 'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, And the birds from its branches. 15 Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, [Bound] with a band of iron and bronze, In the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, And [let] him graze with the beasts On the grass of the earth. 16 Let his heart be changed from [that of] a man, Let him be given the heart of a beast, And let seven times pass over him. **17 'This decision [is] by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'** 18 "This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise [men] of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you [are] able, for the Spirit of the Holy God [is] in you."

Now, I am not going to get into the meaning of the tree because Daniel is going to do this in the next few verses.

However, I did ask you to make a note of verse 17, because whatever is happening in this dream is going to happen for a specific purpose.

And that purpose is detailed in verse 17.

- that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men
Meaning God wants everyone to know that He is the ultimate ruler and He is the one in control.
- Gives it to whomever He will
God wants everyone to know that He puts in control whoever He wants to.
Nebuchadnezzar is not ruling Babylon because he was a mighty fighter – God was the one who put him there.
- sets over it the lowest of men
This means that God can put even low, uncivilized, slave-types over a kingdom if He wants to.
We saw it when we God lifted Joseph in Egypt – And God does it to Jeroboam who was Solomon's servant as well.

God is sovereign.

It's not necessarily because a person is great or worthy of ruling that God allows them to rule. God has His own purposes, and He sets up whom He wants.

19 Then Daniel, whose name [was] Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. [So] the king spoke, and said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, [may] the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!

Daniel is not troubled by the dream because he cannot interpret it.

He is troubled by the context of the dream – what was going to happen to the king.

In fact, the last portion of verse 19, Daniel is telling the king that dream is favorable to his enemies. They were the ones that were going to benefit from it.

20 The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which [could be] seen by all the earth, 21 whose leaves [were] lovely and its fruit abundant, in which [was] food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home-- 22 **it [is] you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.**

Daniel identifies the tree as the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar.

And we just read earlier what happened to the tree – it got chopped down.

This was God pronouncing judgment on Nebuchadnezzar.

23 And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, [bound] with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him'; 24 this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: 25 They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and **seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. 26 And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump [and] roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules.**

Daniel tells the king that his kingdom is going to be taken from him.

That he is going to spend seven years as an animal. That is why I had you make a note of seven times shall pass over you.

However, it will be restored to him when he acknowledges that God is in control – that is why the stump is left.

27 Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by [being] righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to [the] poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity."

Daniel is telling King Nebuchadnezzar to repent from his sins.

Maybe if he repents, God may extend this period of prosperity that Nebuchadnezzar is currently experiencing rather than face judgment.

This doesn't mean that Nebuchadnezzar would repent in order to earn prosperity – he must repent in order to get right with God.

Turn with me to 2 Cor 7,

[2 Corinthians 7:10 NKJV] 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance [leading] to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Sorrow in itself doesn't produce anything except bad feelings, but godly sorrow produces repentance.

Sorry doesn't mean anything unless there is a change.

Since repentance is a change (in both thinking and action), we can tell if sorrow is really godly by seeing if it produces repentance.

So godly sorrow cannot be measured by feelings or tears, only by what it produces.

28 All [this] came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling **by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty**?" 31 While the word [was still] in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! 32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling [shall be] with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses." 33 That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' [feathers] and his nails like birds' [claws].

Here we have the dream regarding his judgment being fulfilled.

God gave Nebuchadnezzar one year to repent after Daniel had given him the interpretation.

Once again, God shows his mercy and patience.

In verse 30, Nebuchadnezzar complemented himself as he admired his accomplishments.

Regarding Babylon,

1)) It's walls were 60 miles around 15 miles on each side, 300 feet high and 80 feet thick, extending 35 feet below the ground so that enemies could not tunnel under.

2)) It had one mile of clear space between the city and the wall all the way around and the wall was protected by a wide and deep moats or canals, filled with water.

3)) It had 250 towers on the wall, guard rooms for soldiers and 100 gates of brass.

Certainly an impressive city – and Nebuchadnezzar decides to take all the glory for it.

I had you make a note of where Nebuchadnezzar says by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty.

Pride was Nebuchadnezzar's downfall.

[Pro 18:12 NKJV] 12 Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor [is] humility.

34 And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven (this is what God was waiting for), and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom [is] from generation to generation.

God miraculously allowed Nebuchadnezzar to recover his own understanding.

However, it was at the end of the time – God is the one who appointed the end of the time.

And in return, Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself and blessed, praised and honored the Most High.

And he acknowledged the authority of the eternal dominion of God.

35 All the inhabitants of the earth [are] reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And [among] the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?" (meaning God is all powerful – when He decides to act, it will happen) 36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works [are] truth, and His ways justice. **And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.**

Turn with me to the book of Acts 12,

We are going to look at an individual who did not respond like Nebuchadnezzar.

[Act 12:21-23 NKJV] 21 So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. 22 And the people kept shouting, "The

voice of a god and not of a man!" 23 Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.

The people praised Herod as they were looking for a deliverer and Herod enjoyed it so much as he took all the glory to himself. And God judged him for it.

At the end of chapter 4, we have the great lesson learned from the life of Nebuchadnezzar .

God humbled him and he responded.

The king was a witness that God could humble anyone and warns us all to not rebel.

Amen.

Let's pray...



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