

DANIEL 4: TEACHING A KING WHAT THE LIVING NEED
TO KNOW Text: Daniel 4:17

INTRO: This verse describes the general theme of the book of Daniel. The entire book is devoted to establishing the fact that God rules the universe. This rule is seen in:

1. The 4 Hebrews who wouldn't eat the king's food, chapter 1
2. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar, chap. 2
3. The handwriting on the wall, chap 5.
4. Likewise the events in chap 4 are meant to vividly establish that God rules the universe.

1. The dream, vs. 1-17
2. The interpretation, vs. 18-27.
3. In this lesson we will note how the truth of our text is underscored in the fulfillment of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

I. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PRIVILEGES.

A. Thru Daniel, God had allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to look over 1,000 years into the future thru the rise & fall of 3 future world empires. No other world leader was ever so privileged, chapter 2.

B. Nebuchadnezzar had been permitted to see the power of God demonstrated in the delivery of Hannaniah, Mishael & Azariah from the fiery furnace, chapter 3.

II. ANOTHER DREAM FROM GOD, 4:1-17

- A. Dream described, vs. 1-17
- B. Dream interpreted, vs. 18-27

III. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PRIDE.

A. Because of sinful pride, Nebuchadnezzar misused his period of grace.

1. God had given him 12 months in which to repent & perhaps avoid the danger of which he had been warned, vs. 28-29.
2. Like Jezebel in Rev. 2:21, God had given time.
3. The same principle was at work in the days of Noah as God patiently waited to give opportunity for repentance, but He warned that His Spirit would not always strive with them, Gen. 6:3.
4. The same principle is at work today. 2 PET. 3:9-10

B. Nebuchadnezzar took all the credit for Babylon's greatness, but God was the power behind the throne, vs. 30-32.

1. God had raised up Babylon for His own purpose.

For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter & hasty nation which marches thru the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs. (Habakkuk 1:6).

2. It is only by the gracious permission of God that any man ever exerts rule or power, John 19:10-11.

As Nebuchadnezzar looked out at Babylon from his palace walls he saw a city which stretched out to a circumference of about 60 miles. He could see some of the 25 streets which intersected each other. Perhaps he could see one or more of the 100 brass gates that led thru the massive city wall. That wall was 300 feet high, 80 feet thick. He could probably see some of the 250 towers built upon that wall. He could look down into the famous hanging gardens, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. He could see the River Euphrates winding its way thru the city, & perhaps the bridge that had been built under his own supervision. For all these things & perhaps more, he took personal credit. If ever a man had anything to be proud of, perhaps Nebuchadnezzar was that man. But the Bible (KJV, NKJ) never uses the word in a good sense.

Prov 16:18-19, Pride goes before destruction, & a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

NOTE: We often use the term pride to mean self respect. Self respect is a necessity, but pride as the word is used in the Bible is a luxury no man can afford. Lack of self respect caused the Israelites to turn away from the promised

land, & the 1-talent man to lose both his talent & his soul. But we must learn to distinguish between healthy self respect & sinful pride.

III. NEBUCHADNESSAR'S HUMILIATION, vs. 33.

IV. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S RECOVERY.

A. The experience was to teach him one basic lesson, 17, 25, 32.

B. When the lesson was learned, the groundwork had been laid for his restoration, vs. 34-37.

C. It would have served no purpose to put him back on the throne without first teaching him the lesson.

1. His aides could have cleaned him up, shaved his face, changed his clothes, put the crown on his head, done 100 other things for him but until he came to his right senses he wouldn't have stayed that way or been of any value on the throne.

2. Like the prodigal son, he needed to come to himself. Nothing would have been accomplished by taking the prodigal by force out of the pig pen, giving him a new suit of clothes, etc. till you can get him to realize his own need in these matters.

CONCLUSION: Our generation desperately needs to learn the lesson Nebuchadnezzar learned-- that the most high God rules in the kingdom of men, & gives power & rulership to whom He desires to give it. This being true, we can

see the wisdom of submitting to God's just laws and cooperating with His righteous purposes, & of learning these lessons the easy way rather than someday having to learn them the hard way as Nebuchadnezzar did.

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Exton, PA, April 21, 1991

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, December 3, 1995

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, May 11, 2003