**Nebuchadnezzar Praises the King of Heaven**

**Daniel Chapter 4 - Lesson #5**

**1 ¶ King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you!** **2 It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. 3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation. 4 ¶ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. 5 I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. 6 So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation. 8 At last Daniel came in before me —  he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods —  and I told him the dream, saying, 9 "O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation.**

This is a very interesting section of Daniel as it almost appears to be written by Nebuchadnezzar. But truthfully, most scholars believe Daniel is simply writing what the King had told him.

**Vs 1 –** Notice he is writing to all peoples not just in his Kingdom. But, those that dwell in all the earth.

**Vs 2-3 –** Nebuchadnezzar is recounting how (the Most High God) showed him wonders and signs.

He then states: His (the Most High God) signs are great, His wonders are mighty, His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, His dominion endures from generation to generation!

This is a totally different Nebuchadnezzar, and we wonder what brought this about. What caused this seemingly massive change.

**Vs 4 –** Nebuchadnezzar begins to retell, the events that led up to this massive change we see in him:

Life was good, things were going well, and I was at ease and prospering!

**Vs 5 –** We see that Nebuchadnezzar has another dream. This one he remembers, this one alarms him, like the first, but this one **he can remember.**

**Yet again, this is the third time that God is trying to speak into Nebuchadnezzar’s life.**

**Vs 6 –** He demands (makes a decree) that all the wise men of Babylon are to be brought before him, so that he can get the interpretation to the dream.

**Vs 7 –** He brings in:

**Magicians** - **חרטם** *khar-tome’*

**Enchanters** *–* conjurers, enchanters –**אשׁף** ash-shawf’

**Chaldeans** -**כשׂדי** kas-dah’-ee

**Astrologers** *–* to determine, to cut out *-* **גזר** ghez-ar’

Now at this point, having failed him already, you would think that he would run to anyone but this group. This is a dry well and will not help him.

But fulfilling the definition of insanity, namely doing the same thing, and expecting a different outcome, Nebuchadnezzar calls for the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers.

He told them all the dream, but none could interpret! No one could explain to him what it meant.

**Vs 8 –** At last Daniel comes to Nebuchadnezzar, he whose name is Belteshazzar, in him is the spirit of the holy Gods.

Now we do not know if he had called for Daniel in the first place when he called for the “dream team”, if Daniel was called later, or if Daniel heard about what was going on and comes.

But in any case: **“at last Daniel comes!”** He then recounts how he told Daniel the dream and what it was.

**Vs 9 -** Chief of the magicians

**Chief** – master or captain, **רב** rab

**Magicians** - **חרטם** khar-tome’

Daniel, tell me what this means. You can sense his desperation.

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**10 The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. 11 The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. 12 Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.13 "I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. 14 He proclaimed aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. 15 But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. 16 Let his mind be changed from a man’s, and let a beast’s mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. 17 The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.’ 18 This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because 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 gods is in you."**

**Vs 10** - and following Nebuchadnezzar walks Daniel through the dream.

**Vs 10 – 12** The dream involves this massive, powerful, beautiful tree that grew. Its height was great and reached to the heaven and it was visible from the whole earth!

Leaves were beautiful, fruit was abundant, and it provided food for all. Provided shade for animals, shelter for birds, and in fact all flesh was fed from this massive, amazing, beautiful tree.

**Vs 13-15a** the next scene. The tree, then he sees a **“watcher”** a **“holy one”** come down from heaven.

Watcher, one who watches, an angel - **עיר** eer

*Holy one -***קדישׁ** kad-deesh’

Pause for a moment. So this watcher gives the command to cut-down the tree, strip the leaves, lop off the branches, scatter the fruit, scatter those abiding in the shelter.

But leave a stump, bind it with a band of iron and bronze, leave it in the field of grass.

**So we have the picture…**

Now notice what the “watcher” is saying and how it changes from impersonal to personal.

Notice the pronoun, not “it” but **“him”** and **“his.”**

This from the mouth of the watcher, got extremely personal. From an object to a person. From impersonal to very personal.

**Vs 17** – seems to be the final words of the **“watcher”** and of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.

Two points that the book of Daniel repeats over and over:

1. God is always working to make Himself known. He does it through His people, He does it through dreams, and He does it through nature:

*“****1*** *¶ « To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. » The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.* ***2*** *Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.* ***3*** *There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.” (Ps 19:1-3 ESV)*

1. God is sovereign, he is the one who sets up kings and kingdoms, countries and presidents.

*“Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.” (Ps 135:6 ESV)*

Nebuchadnezzar is using his understanding and language to explain what he saw to Daniel.

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**19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, "Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies! 20 The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, 21 whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived —  22 it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. 23 And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,’ 24 this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, 25 that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. 26 And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules. 27 Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity."**

**Vs 19** – Daniel is dismayed and alarmed as he considers this dream.

The king can obviously see that Daniel is troubled.

Now notice, Daniel does not say: Finally king Nebuchadnezzar, you are going to get what you deserve. Just the opposite, may this dream apply to those who hate you, those who are your enemies.

Then Daniel begins to unpack the interpretation of the dream.

**\*\*\* As I said in Daniel chapter 2, when God gives the interpretation**

**it is very unwise to go beyond His interpretation. \*\*\***

**Vs 20-23 –**

The massive, beautiful fruit producing tree, the one that shaded the beasts of the field and harbored the birds of the air. **That tree is you oh King!**

**Vs 23 -** He then moves to what the **“watcher”** the **“holy one”** said.

**Vs 24-25 - Daniel now provides the interpretation of that:**

1. It is a decree from the “most High”
2. Against the King
3. You shall be driven from men
4. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox
5. You shall be wetted with the dew of heaven (live outdoors)
6. Seven periods of time will pass over you (likely seven years) UNTIL
7. **“You know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.”**

**Vs 26 –** After the seven periods (likely years) the Kingdom shall be confirmed for you.

The word translated **“confirmed”** is the word **קים** kah-yawm’ It means to be secured or assured.

**Vs 27 –** Then Daniel, the boy turned man, standing before the most powerful man on the planet says: **King, take my council, break off your sins, start practicing righteousness, REPENT!**

Perhaps, your days might be lengthened.

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**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 answered and said, "Is not this great Babylon, whichI have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" 31 While the words were still in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, 32 and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." 33 Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles’ feathers, and his nails were like birds’ claws.**

**Vs 28** – This is rather **ominous**! All that had been prophesied, **came upon King Nebuchadnezzar**.

**Vs 29** – One year later, (end of twelve months) Nebuchadnezzar has likely forgotten about the whole thing. Afterall nothing happened.

**Vs 30** - Look at the personal pronouns!This is PRIDE!

A reminder of something we know to be true about pride:

*Pro 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.*

*Pro 6:16 These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,”*

On the roof of the palace Nebuchadnezzar begins to reflect on the **greatness of His kingdom** (which by the way God had already told him would fall to an inferior kingdom) and **his greatness** (which by the way God through Daniel had already told him was only because God willed it so.

**Vs 31a-** **While the words were still in the king’s mouth,**

Vs 31b-32 - **Two time markers:**

1. Seven periods
2. Until you come to know that God is sovereign, and He is the one who lifts up kingdoms and puts down kingdoms.

**Vs 33a -** **Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar.**

If you are considering cause and effect it cannot get any more obvious than this**!**

**Vs 33b** - He was driven from among men.

Immediately, (modern vernacular) **he lost his mind**. Immediately (modern vernacular) **he went crazy**. Immediately (modern vernacular) **he went insane**, **out of his mind**, fled from the castle, lived in the woods, did not groom himself (at all), ate off the ground like an animal, whatever he grabbed up with his hand (grass, bugs, etc.). **He was insane!**

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**34 ¶ At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason 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 endures from generation to generation; 35 all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" 36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in 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 right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.”**

**\*\*\* Did you notice we shifted back to first person?**

**Vs 34a** – Do not miss this. **At the end of the days…**

The seven periods of time, exactly the time that God had said would pass, did pass!

Vs 34b – Look what Nebuchadnezzar tells us: **I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me**

This condition, came on Nebuchadnezzar immediately, and it left immediately. He was **instantaneously insane**, and he was **instantaneously back in his right, sound mind**.

**Vs 34c** – Ok his reason, his faculties, his mental abilities “returned” then what?

**The man who prior to this event was always saying I or me. Now -**

Blessed the most high God

Praised the most high God

Honored the one who lives forever

Recognized that he has an everlasting dominion

Recognized that he has an enduring kingdom

Recognized that he is sovereign and does as he pleases in heaven and o the earth.

Recognized that no one can stop him

Recognized that He does not explain himself to anyone!

**Vs 36 –** But there is more. **In a Job like fashion God restored him and even added more!**

**Vs 37 - First, what Nebuchadnezzar says about himself:**

1. I praise the “King of heaven”
2. I extol (lift up, exalt) the “King of heaven”
3. I honor the “King of heaven”

**But also, what he says about God:**

1. He is the king of Heaven (this title is used nowhere else in the entire Bible
2. All of his works are true
3. All of his ways (his paths) are just
4. He is quite capable of “putting down” (Humbling the proud)

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**Points of Application:**

1. Lesson for you and I - pride is a real enemy.
2. Unrepentant sin has consequences. We see that Nebuchadnezzar’s insanity fell upon him because of his sin, in particular it seems pride and lack of mercy.

Paul in writing to the church in Rome grabs hold of this:

*“19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,” (Ro 1:19-24 ESV)*

1. We see that Nebuchadnezzar had been set up by God to bring judgment upon Judah (because of their sins) and to be a blessing after that.

*“Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity."” (Da 4:27 ESV)*

This is a universal Christian point. If you and I have been given authority, power, or wealth it is so that we can use it for God’s glory.

1. We are what we are, and we have what we have, by the grace of God. It is not because we are smart or wise. God, should he choose, could take it all away in a second.
2. It is God’s grace when sorrow comes into our life while we are in sin. Seven years of insanity to get Nebuchadnezzar’s attention is a gift of God, for God did not turn his back and leave him in his sin

*“For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.” (2Co 7:10 ESV)*

God is always calling people, in various ways, some on dark horses to come to him.

1. We live in a society that is deeply divided along racial lines. Daniel, was taken captive as a teenager (they snatched him from the youth group). He was marched up to 1000 miles (taking into consideration the trade routes) and he was emasculated and placed with the eunuchs, yet in spite of that he lived his life for God and was used of God. We see that again this morning.
2. When the “Holy One” declares something, and by the way we have all of his declarations for us here in the word of God we can count on it. We can look for someone to explain it away. But it will come to pass.

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