

1. Last week I finished the analysis of Daniel chapter four verses six through nineteen; when time ran out I was about to begin the teaching of verse twenty.

2. Before resuming, I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 1:1-19:

Dan 4:1 My name is Nebuchadnezzar, I am the ruler of the Chaldean Empire, recently I decided to become a Judaeo Christian. Unto all the racial, geographical and linguistic divisions in Babylon, peace be multiplied unto you.

Dan 4:2 As a result of my conversion, I thought it good to give my testimony and reveal the wonders that my Father has bestowed upon me.

Dan 4:3 How great are His revelations! How mighty is His salvation! God's kingdom is everlasting, and His rule extends to every generation.

Dan 4:4 I Nebuchadnezzar was enjoying a time of great prosperity in my palace; as King of the world's greatest empire I was content and happy.

Dan 4:5 Suddenly I had a horrifying dream; it was followed by several terrifying visions - I was greatly disturbed.

Dan 4:6 So I commanded that the wisest men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream.

Dan 4:7 When the diviners, enchanters, astrologers and priest came before me, I told them what I dreamed, but they could not interpret its meaning.

Dan 4:8 Finally my old friend Daniel appeared, this is the same Daniel whose Chaldean name was Belshazzar; I earlier named him after the name of my former heathen god. I repeated the dream to him; after which I said:

Dan 4:9 "Beltshazzar, chief of the wise men, I know that the Spirit of God dwells in you and no mystery is too difficult for you; tell me the meaning of my dream and the visions which followed".

Dan 4:10 These were the visions in my mind: I saw a tree of great height in the center of the world.

Dan 4:11 It was large and strong, with its top touching the heavens, and it could be seen to the ends of the earth.

Dan 4:12 Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, providing food for all. Under it the wild beasts found shade; in its branches the birds of the air nested; all men ate of it.

Dan 4:13 In the vision I saw reconnaissance and judging angels come down from heaven and they cried out:

Dan 4:14 Cut down the tree and lop off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit; let the beasts flee its shade and the birds its branches.

Dan 4:15 But leave in the earth its stump and roots, bound with iron and brass in the grass of the field. Let him be bathed with the dew of heaven and then let him eat alongside the cattle in the fields; let him walk beside them and eat of the grass with them.

Dan 4:16 For seven years let this man lose the mind of a man and be possessed instead with the mind of an animal.

Dan 4:17 By the decree of the reconnaissance angels and the justice and love of God, this sentence is decided so that all who live may know that the Most High rules over the kingdom of men. He gives as He desires, and even sets over it the lowliest of men.

Dan 4:18 This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belshazzar, tell me its meaning. Although none of the wise men in my kingdom can tell me the meaning, you can, I know this because the Spirit of God is in you.

Dan 4:19 Daniel was at first greatly perplexed, and he could not hide his concern. So the king said, "Belshazzar, don't be afraid to tell it like it is." Daniel then answered, "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries!

3. Now let's see what we can learn from verses twenty, twenty-one and twenty-two:

KJV

Dan 4:20 The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;

Dan 4:21 Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:

Dan 4:22 It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

NIV

Dan 4:20 The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth,

Dan 4:21 with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the beasts of the field, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds of the air--

Dan 4:22 you, O king, are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

1. The proud King and conqueror of all the earth is the tree.

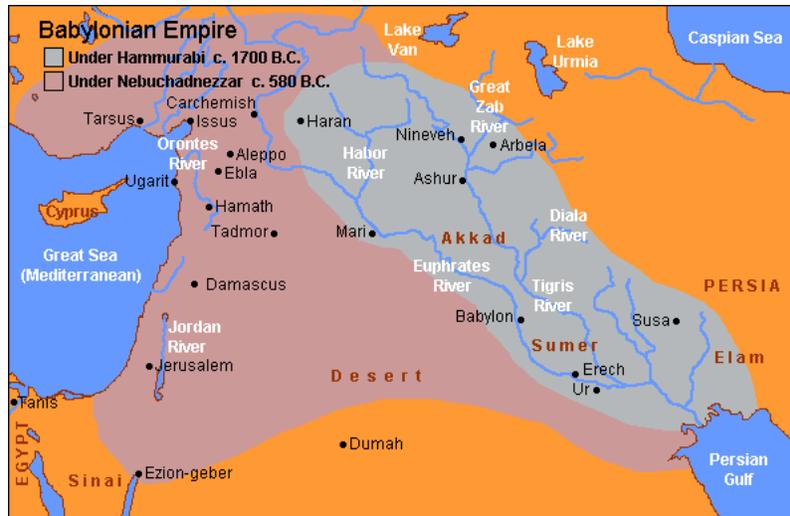
2. "For thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth" as translated in the KJV is not literally true, even though it was the declaration of a prophet.

3. Ancient Semites were fond of hyperbole.

4. Nebuchadnezzar's realm in fact was smaller geographically than either the Persian or the Greek or the Roman empires to come.

5. It was however, very large and included most of the well-known parts of the world

6. While the tree of the vision depicts Nebuchadnezzar, its height and strength represented the rapid rise of the Chaldean Empire, which occurred under Nabopolassar and then his son, Nebuchadnezzar.



7. This already vigorous tree "in the midst of the earth" grew spectacularly and stabilized after Nebuchadnezzar's stunning victory at the Battle of Carchemish, as we earlier studied.

8. With this defeat of the Egyptians, vast lands and people came under Chaldean.

8.1 His brilliance as a military commander, statesman and architect is recorded historically in biblical and extra-Biblical sources.

9. Verse 21 tells us a great deal about Nebuchadnezzar's empire.

9.1 Not only had his military conquests brought great kingdoms under his aegis, but the results of his administrative genius cast such a protective shadow that even "the beasts of the field" and "fowls of the heaven" were protected.

10. It was written of Babylon: "Great prosperity under an agricultural economy and a free enterprise system was established; there was plenty of food and other material substance for all his subjects".

11. Yet there was still more glamour described in the dream! The "leaves" of the great tree indicate the grandeur and splendor of the king's court, while the "fruit" and "meat" represented a picture of abundance.

12. Before I teach verse twenty-three let me give you an expanded translation of Dan 4:20-22

Dan 4:20 For you see my King the large, strong tree that you saw, with its top touching the heavens, visible to the entire earth;

Dan 4:21 that tree with the beautiful foliage and abundant fruit, that tree which provided food for all its citizens and under which the wild beast lived, and in whose branches the birds of the air dwelt;

Dan 4:22 You are that tree, O king, large and strong! Your majesty has become so great as to touch the heavens, and your rule extends over the known world.

13. Now let's see what verse twenty-three has for us:

KJV

Dan 4:23 And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;

NIV

Dan 4:23 "You, O king, saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live like the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.'

Principles:

1. The "watcher" or "messenger" coming down from heaven would certainly seem to be an angel.

1.1 Some have determined these "watchers" to be angels who "give out their voice against nations" as in Jer 4:16-17 ... they form up against Judah because she [Judah] hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD."

Jer 4:16 Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah.

Jer 4:17 As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD.

2. Angels were utilized by the Lord in connection with Israel's fifth cycle of discipline. They are further described, as ministers of the Lord in Psa 103:20 and 21.

Psa 103:20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

Psa 103:21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

3. Accordingly (in Daniel 4:13 as well as our verse 23) I think we can conclude both words, "watcher" and "an holy one," refer to reconnaissance angels who reported their observations of earthly events to the Lord.

4. Just as these angels censured Judah, they condemned Nebuchadnezzar and their "decree . . . and . . . demand" (verse 17) was that he be placed under judgment.

4.1 The purpose was "to the intent that the living [Homo sapiens] may know [Piel imperfect of JADA] that the most High God (the Father) rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He will. (Dan 4:17).

5. Verse twenty-three pronounces with finality the fall of Nebuchadnezzar but let us not count him out. Recall this is his salvation testimony.

6. Nations like individuals are disciplined in time when they reject God.

Hos 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land.

Hos 4:2 There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

Hos 4:3 Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; 2 the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying.

Hos 4:4 "But let no man bring a charge, let no man accuse another, for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest.

Hos 4:5 You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother--

Hos 4:6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priest nation; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

6.1 For individuals our doctrine of discipline tells of a warning and intensive phase and even a sin which would seem to lead to death.

7. Believers are disciplined for either carnality or reversionism or some combination of both.

Heb 12:5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,

Heb 12:6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

8. If discipline comes for carnality the discipline is canceled by the use of rebound at least to the extent that discipline for punishment is turned into discipline for "blessing".

1Co 11:31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.

8.1 Discipline for reversionism or evil requires a change in thinking and the associated halt in the aberrant behavior.

8.2 There are for the individual believer stages of discipline just as there would also seem to be for the national entity.

8.4.1 There is a warning stage where God presents a gentle reminder and if there is no response then the severity is increased.

Rev 3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.
Rev 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

9. Nations would seem to be culpable and are expected to have

- a large pivot of positive believers
- a significant evangelical effort both at home and abroad
- pro Semitic policies for ethnic Jews living in their borders
- establishment principles which protect and support the four divine institutions

10. When nations fail to support such principles outlined, divine discipline in stages would seem to come upon them.

11. The root cause of divine discipline for a nation is "a lack of knowledge" of the Word of God and the implementation of its principles.

Hos 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

12. As we look at God's dealing with Israel and His warnings there are cycles resulting finally in a stage called the "fifth cycle".

12.1 There are many passages outlining the process but the most extensive can be found in Deu 28:58-67 and Lev 26:14-39.

12.2 Keep in mind, like as in most prophetic Scriptures the interpretation must be adjusted so as to apply today.

12.3 Some of the caveats of Scripture translate readily like famine, lack of rain etc. but descriptions of being eaten by beast might better be interpreted in the light of internecine carnage or the ravages of war inflicted by another nation.

End Lesson Taught 6-17-2001