

1. Last week I continued the teaching of The Doctrine of The Five Cycles of Discipline. When time ran out I was about to read a quotation from Flavius Josephus.
2. Before resuming our study at Daniel 4:24 I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 4:1-23.

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 thought I had it all.

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 "Belshazzar, 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 animals 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 them the lowliest of men.

Dan 4:18 After Nebuchadnezzar had described all he dreamed he said, "Belshazzar, tell me its meaning. None of the wise men in my kingdom can tell me the meaning, you can, and 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!

Dan 4:20 For you see my King, the large, tall, strong tree which was visible to the entire earth;

Dan 4:21 the same tree with the beautiful foliage and abundant food, that same tree which provided not only prosperity for its citizens; even shade for their indigenous fauna and a pleasant place for the birds of the air;

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. You have provided great prosperity for all your citizens.

Dan 4:23 In your dream "You saw a special angel from God, he delivered a message just for you "Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump in the field, bind it with iron and bronze, this is to be done while its roots are still in the ground". You, Oh King are that tree. The angel then said "Let Nebuchadnezzar be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live in the field like a wild animal for seven years."

3. Last week I completed our review of the cycles of discipline with the statement the Jews are now under the Fifth Cycle of discipline. Let me read you what Josephus has written in his book commonly known as *War*. From this quotation you will get a feel for the horrors associated with Israel's ultimate 70 A.D. fall. After the quotation I will resume our review of this most important doctrine.

THE JEWISH WAR

"The madness of the partisans grew together with their famine, and both those miseries daily became more and more inflamed. There was no corn to be seen anywhere, but the robbers went running into and searching men's private houses; and then, if they found any, they tortured them for having denied they had any; and if they found none, they tortured them worse because they supposed they had more carefully concealed it.

The proof they used as to whether they had any or not was based on the bodies of these miserable wretches; if they were in good shape, they supposed they were in no want at all of food; but if they were wasted, they walked off without searching any - furthermore they thought it proper to kill the latter because they saw they would very soon die for want of food. Many sold what they had for one measure of wheat, if they were richer; but of barley, if they were poorer.

Then they shut themselves up in the innermost rooms of their houses and ate the corn they had gotten; some did so without grinding it because of the extremity of their need, while others baked bread out of it, as necessity and fear dictated: a table was nowhere laid for a distinct meal, but they snatched the food out of the fire, half-cooked and ate it hastily.

It was now a miserable situation, and a sight to bring tears to our eyes, for while the powerful had more than enough food, the weak were suffering for lack of it. Famine is hard on all other emotions, and destructive to nothing so much as to decency; for what was otherwise worthy of reverence was now despised; children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their mouths, and, what was even more to be pitied, so too did the mothers pull the food from the mouths of their infants; and when those most dear to them were perishing in their arms, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives; and while they ate in this manner, yet they were not secure in so doing; for the partisans everywhere came down upon them suddenly, and snatched away from them what they had taken from others; for when the latter saw any house shut up, this was a signal to them that the people within had gotten some food

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Now let's resume where we left off last week at point sixteen:

16. With reference to the fifth cycle Moses taught Israel will suffer as follows:

16.1 Famine in the land.

16.2 People will eat their sons and their daughters.

16.3 Places of worship will be destroyed.

16.4 People will be dispersed to foreign lands.

16.5 The land will receive a long awaited sabbath year.

16.6 Israel in their dispersion will become timorous, a fallen leaf will cause them to run in fear.

16.7 They will flee the sword even though no one is pursuing.

16.8 They will be devoured by the gentiles in those foreign lands.

17. C. I. Scofield was the first to classify and organize Lev 26:14-39 into degrees of discipline for Israel.

17.1 Scofield in his original Bible elected six degrees or cycles of discipline as follows:

1st - Distress Lev. 26:14-17

2nd - Drought Lev. 26:18-20

3rd - Beasts Lev. 26:21-22

4th - Disease Lev. 26:23-26

5th - Famine Lev. 26:27-31

6th - Dispersion Lev. 26:32-39

18. Whichever of these great expositors and organizers of the Word you choose there is no doubt a warning to all national entities today; and this certainly includes the United States of America.

19. We must recognize the importance of being part of the pivot and thus sustain our country's client nation status.

20. The key to avoid national discipline then is for its citizens to maintain a large pivot and a minimal spin off.

Let me give you five final summary points:

1. The intent of the divine revelation was to communicate to the king that he was about to personally experience a great disaster; he would lose his regal position for a period of seven years.

2. The Aramaic is no more specific than the English translation in regard to the length of time involved.
3. However, an interpretation such as days, weeks, or months would hardly have allowed time for the predicted developments.
4. It seems best to adopt "years" as the meaning.
5. There are those who take the position the term "seven times pass by" merely communicates God's perfect time.
6. Now let's see what Dan 4:24-27 has for us:

KJV

Dan 4:24 This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

Dan 4:25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

Dan 4:26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

Dan 4:27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility.

NIV

Dan 4:24 "This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king:

Dan 4:25 You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.

Dan 4:26 The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules.

Dan 4:27 Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue."

Principles:

1. After a brief summary explanation of the dream, Daniel undertakes to detail his

interpretation.

2. The King is given hope but it will require certain changes on his part.
3. The pride of the King is keeping him from God's deliverance. He is told he must become as our Lord would later say "poor in spirit".
4. Daniel explains that the stump is bound so that it might once again sprout; a fallen empire is seen as a fallen tree but the stump is left for a future revival.
5. As noted, I think the term "seven times would pass over" is best translated "seven years" as the duration of the King's psychosis.
6. The use of time as in "a time, a times and a half-times" to describe the three and one-half years of the Tribulation also supports a 7 year translation.
7. The Chaldean word "CHALAPH" is translated "pass over" and it should better read "pass by".
8. The psychosis would last for a period of seven years, after which the King would be receptive to God's overtures i.e. His presentation of the Gospel to the King.
9. When Daniel proposed to the king "let my counsel be acceptable," he, Daniel, is urging Nebuchadnezzar to positively respond to "salvation doctrine".
10. Divine viewpoint is always the best way out of an impending disaster!
11. The term translated "be acceptable" is the Piel imperfect of SHEPHAR, meaning "to be beautiful"; literally, "let my doctrine be beautiful to you."
 - 11.1 Let me explain the imperfect tense as over against the perfect.
12. Because God is gracious, He never judges without first giving warning and the opportunity of repentance (change of mind).
 - 12.1 In this case, repentance had to do with Nebuchadnezzar's first receiving Christ as Savior and then his implementation of sound and fair establishment policies in the land.
13. It took courage on the part of Daniel to take it upon himself to tell the King he must drop his arrogance and cruelty and become a "good" King?
14. It was concern and a relaxed mental attitude that prompted Daniel to speak the truth.

14.1 The source of his concern and his relaxed mental attitude was Bible Doctrine in his soul.

15. He knew that both his and the King's destiny was firmly in God's hands!

16. The Piel imperative of PERAQ means "to shatter in pieces."

16.1 Consequently Daniel's advice to "break off thy sins"; refers to a "shattering" of Nebuchadnezzar's mental attitude sins of pride and egotism which were keeping him from faith alone in the Christ to come.

17. Keep in mind there is only one way of salvation.

Rom 3:22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,

Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Rom 3:24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Rom 4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?

Rom 4:2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about--but not before God.

Rom 4:3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Rom 4:4 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.

Rom 4:5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Rom 4:6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

18. This was a definite appeal for Nebuchadnezzar to accept salvation by faith in the Christ to come.

19. Standing before the mighty Potentate of Chaldea, Daniel presented the claims of the Sovereign God of the universe.

20. There was never a question concerning Nebuchadnezzar's greatness, part of which can be attributed to his character. Even as an unbeliever, his norms and standards had been very high until pride began to turn his head and inflate his ego.

21. His stability faltered; he became less benevolent and less loyal to his subjects. Such moral decline is often a natural result for the unbeliever who has come face to face with

the power of God and rejected His grace.

22. By the time of the "fiery furnace" incident of Daniel, Chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar's clear thinking was obliterated by rage, even to the point as we earlier studied that he unthinkingly sacrificed his top military personnel to appease his power lust.

23. This degeneracy of mind had now overflowed to all his subjects so that he ignored their rights and individual dignity. His discipline is just around the corner but first he is warned.

24. The phrase "By showing mercy" is the Piel infinitive of CHANAN, meaning "be gracious," and is a reference "to the poor" (Piel participle of ANAH, literally, "the ones being oppressed").

25. This was neither the first nor the last time history would record incidents of oppression and exploitation: the Jews under Egyptian tyranny; the indentured slaves of the Roman Republic; the peasants of the French Revolution, they all experienced tyranny.

26. Daniel closed his appeal by reminding the king that tranquility and peace of mind is a result of peace with God.

End Lesson Taught 7-1-2001