

1. Last week I finished teaching of The Doctrine of The Five Cycles of Discipline and when time expired I had just begun an analysis of Dan 4:24-27.
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. Now let's return to our study of Daniel's interpretation of the King's dream:

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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.

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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. The dream and the subsequent vision were a definite appeal for Nebuchadnezzar to accept salvation by faith in the Christ to come.
2. Standing before the mighty Potentate of Chaldea, Daniel presented the claims of the Sovereign God of the universe.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. The phrase "By showing mercy" is the Peal infinitive of CHANAN, meaning "be gracious," and is a reference "to the poor" (Piel participle of ANAH, literally, "the ones being oppressed").
8. 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.

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

10. However, like so many unbelievers, by refusing God's gift of salvation, Nebuchadnezzar chose the hard way, continuing his life as before.

10.1 Every lesson in life is learned either THE EASY WAY or THE HARD WAY. God does not violate human volition but is faithful in keeping His Word.

11. He promises that when anyone reaches God consciousness and goes on positive signals, He will provide information whereby that person can be saved.

12. In Nebuchadnezzar's case, receptiveness to the Gospel was impossible because of his colossal pride which completely obscured his need for a Savior.

13. God in His omniscience knew exactly what circumstances were necessary to break this man's exaggerated ego.

14. The Word of God does not tell us if the king was troubled by Daniel's disclosure. We are told that he was given a full year in which to make a decision and thereby be spared the judgment which had been outlined for him by Daniel.

15. Let me here give you an expanded translation of Dan 4:24-27:

Dan 4:24 This is the meaning, O king the Most High has passed the following sentence upon you:

Dan 4:25 You shall be cast out of the Palace and you shall dwell with the wild beasts in the forest; you shall even be given grass to eat in the barns and in the evenings you will be let out into the field; this shall last for seven years until you finally recognize it is the Most High God of Israel who rules over the kingdoms of men and gives rulership of them to whomsoever He will.

Dan 4:26 The command that "the stump and roots of the tree are to be left" means that your kingdom shall be preserved for you, once you have learned it is heaven that rules.

Dan 4:27 Therefore, O king, let doctrine be beautiful to you as it is to me! Take my advice; stop being filled with mental attitude sins; accept the righteousness which comes to you the moment you receive Christ as Savior; begin to show mercy to the oppressed; then your prosperity will be long and your mind at peace.

Now let's see what we can learn from verses twenty-eight through thirty-one.

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Dan 4:28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

Dan 4:29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

Dan 4:30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

Dan 4:31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

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Dan 4:28 All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar.

Dan 4:29 Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon,

Dan 4:30 he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"

Dan 4:31 The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you.

1. Perhaps it was to drown out the memory of Daniel's words that Nebuchadnezzar became increasingly involved in his building projects and his being more, and more occupied with "self".

2. As "he walked in the palace" he spoke of the glories of Babylon, doubtless the most magnificent city of the ancient world.

2.1 His egomania was expressed in his boasting: "Is not this the great Babylon that I HAVE BUILT . . . by the MIGHT of MY power, and for the honour of MY majesty?"

3. Pride was the original sin of Satan; and pride coupled with approbation lust was Nebuchadnezzar's downfall!

4. Let me give you a quote from the Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. III, p. 216:

"... this "little boy [Nebuchadnezzar] whose father had encouraged him to carry a labourer's basket at the rebuilding of Etemenanaki ... His father created the pinnacles of the great temples, the Ishtar Gates with their wonderful gryphons [imaginary creations - animal combinations like lions with wings etc.] and bulls, ... which will remain his monument as long as the world cares for Assyriology ... His peaceful energies were devoted to building magnificent palaces and temples, and herein he excelled. The fame of his city Babylon which he made peculiarly his own spread far and wide; Josephus records how he adorned the Temple of Belus with spoil and rebuilt the old city, making the Hanging Gardens to please his queen, who was from Media. As it is today, partly uncovered of the dust of centuries, the ponderous buildings of brickwork, cream, yellow, red, still stand in towering rampart and bastion, solid wall and foundations, pavement and Processional Way."

5. How did Nebuchadnezzar become so great? By God's provision! It was God who gave him the kingdom; it was God who gave him the mentality and ability to plan, build and administer!

6. Because the king consistently refused to recognize the supremacy of God giving Him the glory, it was not surprising that before Nebuchadnezzar finished speaking, "a voice from heaven" was heard.

7. Since Nebuchadnezzar was in the very act of extolling his own glory when the voice came, there can be no doubt as to the connection between his arrogance and God's judgment. "The kingdom is departed" (ADAH) meaning "has been removed or abolished."

8. It is interesting to note that virtually all Assyriologists agree that a gap exists in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, although they offer no explanation as to its cause. Clearly our chapter describes that gap.

9. Before moving to verse thirty-two let me give you an expanded translation of Dan 4:28-31:

Dan 4:28 The events predicted happened to King Nebuchadnezzar:

Dan 4:29 Twelve months later, as he was arrogantly walking in the royal palace in Babylon,

Dan 4:30 the king said, "Oh Babylon how great you are! Was it not I, with my great strength who built for you a royal residence for my splendor and majesty?"

Dan 4:31 While these words were still on the king's lips, a voice came from heaven. "It has been decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar, that your kingdom is no longer yours, it has been taken from you and given it to others".

10. Now let see what principles we can gather from verse thirty-two:

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Dan 4:32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

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Dan 4:32 You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. 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."

1. The phrase: "And they" refers to those involved in deposing the king. "Drive thee from men" (TERADH) means continual dropping, chipping away or driving out.

2. The Lord has not seen fit to furnish us with the details of Nebuchadnezzar's absence from his palace, but we know of a certainty that he literally lived with "the beasts of the field," eating "grass as oxen."

3. The phrase: "Wet with dew" (verses 15, 23 and 25) indicates that he was outside much of the time. All of these descriptions reveal that the seven years of judgment involved numerous radical changes in the life of the once great king.

Dan 4:15 Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots 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 in the grass of the earth:

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;

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.

4. Because of his madness Nebuchadnezzar fulfilled Daniel's prophecy by literally acting like an animal, and was consequently isolated from society.

5. In the ancient world it was considered "bad luck" to kill an insane person. Nebuchadnezzar's malady protected him from physical injury, just as David's feigned madness at Gath spared his life.

1Sa 21:10 And David arose and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

1Sa 21:11 And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

1Sa 21:12 And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

1Sa 21:13 And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

1Sa 21:14 Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me?

1Sa 21:15 Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

6. It is pitiful that some people must sink to the lowest level of degradation before they can learn a lesson.

6.1 So strong was Nebuchadnezzar's negative volition toward the Lord and so debased was his mind because of his mental attitude sins, it took seven years of thinking and living like an animal for the once proud king to learn a great principle: "until thou know [JADA] that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

7. One of the last things Nebuchadnezzar probably remembered was the "voice from heaven" telling him that his greatness had come from God!

7.1 He had done nothing to deserve his former exalted position. That sobering thought would take seven years to sink in!

8. Before we go to verse thirty-three, let's see how verse Dan 4:32 looks in expanded translation:

Dan 4:32 You my King shall now be cast out of the Palace and shall lose your place among mankind for you shall live with the wild beasts; you shall be given grass to eat like an ox, and seven years later you will know Who rules over the kingdoms of men and that He gives rulership to whomever He chooses.

9. Now let's look at the prophecy's fulfillment, Dan 4:33:

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Dan 4:33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

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Dan 4:33 Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

Principles:

1. Down came the tree. Gone was all the glamor!
2. The splendor of his court was replaced by the great outdoors.

3. Grass became a poor substitute for the delicacies of a royal banquet.

4. His appearance was radically altered. He was exposed to the elements in winter, his hair became matted, thick and bushy; it burned under the summer sun and became so course it was "like eagles' feathers."

5. Uncut, his nails grew long "like birds' claws" - a sorry and pitiful sight no doubt.

6. The great King, because of his numerous bad choices was now suffering from a psychosis, specifically a maniacal state in which the patient believes and acts like an animal.

7. His final state of mania as best we can tell will last for seven years. It is not known how long he suffered, i.e., how slowly or quickly the psychosis progressed.

8. Chances are it was gradual; regardless we do know his malady became so serious that the Kingdom was taken from him. Perhaps it was a friendly takeover or perhaps hostile.

8.1 From the Chaldean phrase in Dan 4:32 and the use of the verb TERADH in the Piel we can assume that gradually his cabinet must have removed his prerogatives and perquisites. This would portend a beneficent "exile".

8.2 Recall our earlier study of verse thirty-two:

Dan 4:32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

8.3 The phrase: "And they" refers to those involved in deposing the king. "Drive thee from men" (TERADH) means continual dropping, chipping away or driving out.

9. As we will see in verse thirty-six his return in seven years will be without untoward incident.

10. Now for an expanded translation of verse thirty-three:

Dan 4:33 At once the prophecy was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar was cast out from among men: he ate grass like an ox, and his body was bathed with the dew of heaven. His hair grew until it was coarse like the feathers of an eagle, and his nails became like the claws of a bird.

11. Now let's see what we can learn from Dan 4:34 and 35.

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Dan 4:34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

Dan 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

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Dan 4:34 At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

Dan 4:35 All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"

Principles:

1. At last the once arrogant emperor recognized God's grace and responded to it! Now he was ready to acknowledge that it is the Lord who both raises up and removes kings. (Dan. 2:21).

Dan 2:21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

Psa 75:5 Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.

Psa 75:6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

Psa 75:7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

2. In the phrase "I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up [NETAL] mine eyes." the King expressed his faith from a totally helpless psychotic condition in the only way he could. He did this by simply lifting his eyes to heaven. Brutish men and animals look down at the things of this earth; those things near. Spiritual man looks up toward God; those things afar off—toward heavenly things.

3. Nebuchadnezzar was like the man--Legion with the unclean spirit in Mar 5:2-6.

4. Legion was possessed but we must ask the question, in these cases how does volition relate or does it relate to such a recovery.

Mar 5:2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

Mar 5:3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

Mar 5:4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

Mar 5:5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

Mar 5:6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

5. Legion could only demonstrate his faith by running to Jesus falling at his feet and silently worshiping Him.

6. Faith in Christ always results in eternal salvation; and it was then that the king's sanity "returned" to him, as shown by the Piel imperfect of TUB [it began to return to him].

7. Salvation initiated in Nebuchadnezzar a response of worship which he recorded in his salvation tract: "I blessed [BERACH] the most High" Jesus Christ, the only Savior (Acts 4:12)!

Act 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

8. Keep in mind that this tract was written after Nebuchadnezzar had learned doctrine. Only then could he understand Christ's Millennial and eternal reign and pen the words, "whose dominion is an everlasting dominion."

9. Jesus Christ has an eternal empire consisting of regenerate persons from every generation; thus, "his kingdom is from generation to generation." Among its citizens is Nebuchadnezzar!

10. What Nebuchadnezzar had learned the hard way "whatever man attains is simply the result of God's matchless grace." In verse 35, he states that "all the inhabitants of the earth are ... nothing."

11. Man deserves nothing from God based on who and what man is! Grace depends on who and what God is. Grace is God at work on behalf of man. "He doeth is the Peal active participle of ABADH, it means "to cultivate" or "to work."

12. Recognition of the sovereignty and grace of God in two areas is noted: "the army of heaven" (angels) and the "inhabitants of the earth" (mankind).

13. "None can stay his hand" is literally, "to strike the hand" in the sense of hindering an action. No one can hinder the plan of God nor does anyone have the right to question God's wisdom!

14. Not only did Nebuchadnezzar confess Christ as Savior, but he understood God's power and grace.

15. Such knowledge was the power that produced a change in mental attitude of the King; it was not only enormous but instantaneous.

16. Now let's take a look at an expanded translation of Dan 4:34 and 35:

Dan 4:34 When my time of trial was over, I, Nebuchadnezzar raised my eyes to heaven, and expressed my faith in Christ. My ability to reason was restored and I blessed the Most High God of Heaven. I praised Him and gave glory to Jehovah God who lives forever, whose kingdom is represented in every generation of men.

Dan 4:35 All who live on the earth are counted as nothing; He does as He pleases with the angels of heaven and His creations on earth. There is nothing that can hinder His divine Plan of grace for He is sovereign; nor can anyone rightfully question His wisdom and ask, What have you done and why have you done it?

End Lesson Taught 7-8-2001