

1. Last week I taught Dan 4:24-35; when time ran out I was about to start an analysis of verse 36.
2. Before resuming our study at Daniel 4:36, I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 4:1-35.

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 as 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."

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.

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 to another".

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.

Dan 4:33 At once the prophecy was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar was stricken: he ate grass like an ox, and his body was bathed with the precipitations 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.

The King continued:

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?

3. Now for verse thirty-six:

KJV

Dan 4:36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

NIV

Dan 4:36 At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before.

Let's see what principles we can get from this verse:

1. At the moment of his conversion, Nebuchadnezzar experienced a fourfold restoration:

1.1 "My reason returned" would certainly indicate that the king was restored to the palace and both his physical and psychological health returned.

1.2 After a seven-year absence Nebuchadnezzar's empire was restored to him.

1.3 "Mine honour and brightness" presides additional insight. Honor speaks of Nebuchadnezzar's character while brightness refers to his appearance. Evidently the king was a handsome man and his physical restoration was complete.

1.4 "My counsellors ... sought me" refers to his popularity being renewed. As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ Nebuchadnezzar gained the favor of both God and man.

2. "I was established" is TEQAN, meaning "to be arranged, straightened out."

2.1 With the reinstatement of Nebuchadnezzar as the rightful ruler, the kingdom remained perfectly stabilized throughout the rest of his life.

2.2 Nebuchadnezzar not only had a prosperous reign, but a long one--forty-three years, minus the seven years of discipline—c. 605 B.C. to 562 B.C.

3. His declaration of "majesty ... added" would certainly indicate that after his salvation he became one of the greatest monarchs of all time.

4. Before moving to Dan 4:37 let's look at an expanded translation of verse 36:

Dan 4:36 At the moment of my conversion, my health was restored as was the glory of my kingdom; my power and splendor was returned to me. My nobles and lords sought me out; not only was my kingdom returned but I became even more powerful and influential.

5. And now for the King's last tribute to the God of Israel. The last sentence in His glorious salvation tract:

KJV

Dan 4:37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

NIV

Dan 4:37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Now let's see what principles we can glean from our last verse:

1. In the conclusion of his testimony, Nebuchadnezzar praises, extols and honors "the King of heaven" Jesus Christ.

2. Praise is a translation from SHEBACH and is well translated. Extol is a translation from RUM, meaning "exalt" or "laud." Honor is a translation from HADAR meaning "respect" or "to reverence."

3. There was nothing too great that could be said for the King of Kings, and Nebuchadnezzar wanted the world to know that Jesus Christ's "works" are "truth."

4. Apart from the knowledge of doctrine mankind is totally ignorant of God's grace; only through doctrine can one come to comprehend the work of God.

2Pe 3:18 But grow in the grace and by means of the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

5. Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed that God's "ways are judgment" or literally, "just." God is plus Righteousness and all He does is perfect.

6. It is vitally important to realize that our orientation to the plan of God is in direct proportion to our knowledge of the Word of God; the less we understand doctrine, the more we substitute human energy and human gimmicks for God's plan.

7. Possibly no one has ever been more qualified than King Nebuchadnezzar to understand the phrase "those that walk in pride he [God] is able to abase."

8. His pre-salvation experience was one of arrogance and pride. Man must come to the end of himself in order for grace to operate. Since there is no place for human works or pride in the plan of God; God will never violate our right to choose. God is a gentleman and he will never force himself on anyone.

9. In the following poem preserved for us (at least according to The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 111, pp. 216 - 217), Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that he was nothing and that God is everything:

Without thee, Lord, what could there be
For the king thou lovest, and dost call his name?
Thou shalt bless his title, as thou wilt,
And unto him vouchsafe a path direct;
I, the prince obeying thee,
Am what thy hands have made;
Tis thou who art my creator,
Entrusting me with the rule of hosts of men.
According to thy mercy, Lord,
Which thou dost spread o'er all of them,
Turn into loving-kindness thy dread power,
And make to spring up in my heart
A reverence for thy divinity.
Give as thou thinkest best.

10. Now let me give you an expanded translation of Dan 4:37.

Dan 4:37 Therefore, I, Nebuchadnezzar, now praise and exalt and glorify the King of Heaven, because all His works are right and His ways just; and those who walk in pride God will ultimately humble.

Summary Points Daniel Chapter Four:

1. Man needs to recognize his own bankruptcy and depend upon the grace of God.
2. Grace begins at salvation; there is no grace apart from the Cross.
3. Grace always precedes judgment. For example there was:
 - Warning by the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
 - Warning of the "tree" dream Daniel
 - There was even a twelve-month extension; a time provided for repentance and then God lowered the boom

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.

4. When man seeks to lift himself to the level of God, he reduces himself to the level of an animal.
5. Mental attitude sins destroy norms and standards and nullify one's ability to cut through his area of egocentricity and see oneself in divine perspective.
6. Unchecked mental attitude sins can produce psychoses or neuroses.
7. Mental attitude sins always affect others in your vicinity.
8. There is no substitute for fellowship with God.
9. There is no security in power, wealth or human success.
 - 9.1 True security can be found only in a relationship with God. That relationship of course begins at point of regeneration.

10. Now we are ready to see what Daniel Chapter Five has for us. First I think we need to have a listing of the Kings of Babylon since we are about to jump from Nebuchadnezzar to Belshazzar.

11. Rulers of the Chaldean Empire:

1.1 Nabopolassar (625-605 B.C.).

1.2 Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.), son of Nabopolassar.

1.3 Amel-Marduk (Evil-Merodach, 562-560 B.C.), son of Nebuchadnezzar.

1.4 Neriglissar (560-556 B.C.), son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar.

1.5 Labashi-Marduk (556 B.C.), son of Neriglissar & grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.

1.6 Nabonidus (556-539 B.C.), son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar—Co-Regency.

1.7 Belshazzar (553-539 B.C.), son of Nabonidus & grandson of Nebuchadnezzar—Co-Regency.

Introduction to Chapter Five

1. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 B.C., the Chaldean Empire staggered and eventually collapsed under the leadership of several inept and immoral rulers.

2. Both Nebuchadnezzar and his father, Nabopolassar, had been vigorous, dynamic military and administrative leaders; but Nebuchadnezzar's son, Amel-Marduk, also known in history as Evil-Merodach, was a blot on the family tree.

3. A poor excuse for a son he was an even poorer ruler. So detrimental to the nation was his reign that his brother-in-law Neriglissar had him killed.

3.1 Then Neriglissar was the son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar who took Amel-Marduk's place.

3.2 He ruled briefly with some distinction and upon his death was succeeded by his son, Labashi-Marduk, who after nine months was assassinated.

4. In 556 B.C., a Babylonian noble, Nabonidus, came to the throne. Although not of royal blood, he had married, Nebuchadnezzar's second daughter and thus claimed the throne.

4.1 Ancient accounts agree that this king spent much of his time away from Babylon, but

5. Since Belshazzar was not mentioned by such reputable historians as Xenophon, Herodotus, Berosus and Abydenus, it was assumed that he was a mythical figure.

5.2 Thus throughout many centuries, writers neglected any reference to Belshazzar, and all were in agreement that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon.

6. According to Ptolemy's canon Nabonidus reigned seventeen years; in this well respected history. Even here there is no mention of Belshazzar.

6.1 The contradictions between the historical canons and the Scriptures were patently obvious and a source of some consternation of "the religious crowd."

7. Skeptics cited these historians as a means to discredit the Book of Daniel while Bible commentators tried to solve or shirk this controversy by rejecting the conclusions of the historians.

8. In 1854, the British archeologist, Sir H. C. Rawlinson, translated cuneiform inscriptions which named Belshazzar (Bel-sarra-uzar) as the eldest son of Nabonidus.

9. These discoveries testified, to the accuracy of the Biblical references to Belshazzar (Dan. 5; Dan 7:1 and Dan 8:1) and further proved that while the Bible is not a history book, all historical information contained therein is correct!

10. At the time when Nabonidus was put on the throne by his cohorts, who had assassinated Labashi-Marduk, the world was divided into four great spheres of influence: Medo-Persia, Chaldea (Babylon), Egypt and Lydia.

11. After the Persians conquered the Medes and the Lydian Empire of Croesus, Cyrus, king of Persia, turned his attention to the decadent Babylonian Empire.

11.1 Early in 539 B.C., he defeated the Chaldeans at Opis and Sippara, both of these cities were located just north of Babylon on the Euphrates.

12. Only the double walled city of Babylon remained to be captured. It was to be included in his brilliant array of conquests.

12.1 A Medo-Persian force under Darius, was stationed in the area when Belshazzar gave his famous banquet.

12.2 The party to end all parties culminated in the death rattle of the great Chaldean Empire!

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