

1. Last week I completed the teaching of chapter four; I also gave you several points of introduction to Chapter Five. When time ran out we were about to begin a study of verse One of Chapter Five.

2. Before resuming our study, I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan Chapter Four.

Dan 4:1 My name is Nebuchadnezzar, I am the ruler of the Chaldean Empire, recently I decided to become a Jew and 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?

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.

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.

3. Now we are ready for Daniel Chapter five verse one.

KJV

Dan 5:1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

NIV

Dan 5:1 King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them.

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

1. The Chaldean language indicates the feast was more like a drunken orgy with ample food and wine consumed in excess.
2. This verse reveals that Belshazzar was a man without moral principles.

2.1 No man in a position of leadership who "ties one on" and thus loses control of himself can continue to function effectively. As we will see this was certainly not a time for the Chaldean monarch to be inebriated!

3. Instead, Belshazzar and his nobles should have been alert, for already the Persian army was outside the walls preparing a night assault on the capital city.

3.1 There is archaeological evidence that the river Euphrates was diverted lowering its depth to permit the Medo-Persian force to enter the city.

4. When a national entity is ruled by a self-centered individual who shows little or no regard for the consequences of his actions, it is just a matter of time until that nation succumbs to foreign invaders.

5. Belshazzar had completely divorced himself from reality. He lived in the elusive world of escapism, self-indulgence and sublimation; and it seemed gave no thought to the peril which loomed at the gates of Babylon.

6. Undoubtedly his grandfather had taught him the principles of leadership involved in governing a nation but it is also clear he has forgotten much of what his grandfather had taught him.

7. His grandfather was an honorable man and a highly capable ruler who had successfully united a disorderly kingdom left by his predecessors.

8. However, Belshazzar failed to demonstrate any of the leadership qualities of his forebearers; he was both fierce and egocentric.

9. Without mentioning him by name, Xenophon described the last ruler of the Chaldean Empire as "impious and cruel" and demonstrated this by two graphic illustrations.

9.1 On a hunting trip one of Belshazzar's nobles was the first to bag his limit.

9.1.1 This so enraged the king that he drew his sword and killed the nobleman on the spot, thus setting a precedent which caused many a prudent hunter of the Chaldean Empire to feign poor marksmanship!

9.2 On another occasion, the king hosted a party similar to the orgy described in our passage. During the festivities, an attendee named Gadates was admired by one of the king's concubines.

9.2.1 For this "breach" Xenophon writes: "the unfortunate man was castrated!"

10. Let me here give you an expanded translation of verse one:

Dan 5:1 King Belshazzar summoned a thousand of his nobles for a grand party; it soon turned into a licentious and drunken orgy.

11. Now let's see what we can learn from Dan 5:2-4.

KJV

Dan 5:2 Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

Dan 5:3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

Dan 5:4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

NIV

Dan 5:2 While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them.

Dan 5:3 So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them.

Dan 5:4 As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

Principles:

1. Belshazzar had for so long gratified his own desires and given free rein to his old sin nature that every decent norm and standard had been destroyed.
2. "While he tasted the wine" is literally, "when the wine was relished by him." Under the influence of alcoholic beverage, Belshazzar recklessly ordered the Jewish ceremonial vessels to be brought from the treasure house into the banquet hall.

Dan 1:2 And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put them in the treasure house of his god.

3. Vaguely aware that his empire was in a precarious position, he sought the favor and approbation of the Babylonian pantheon by desecrating the holy vessels of Israel.

3.1 Thus the king and his guests drank toasts and praised the gods of Babylon with riotous song in blatant defiance of the God of the Jews.

4. There were at least four gods of Chaldea to whom this drunken adulation was given:

4.1 Marduk was the chief god of the Babylonian pantheon and the patron god of the city of Babylon. He was also known as Bel, the sun god, and was comparable to Zeus or Jupiter;

4.2 Nebo or Nabu was the god of wisdom, literature and education;

4.3 Nergal was the god of war; and

4.4 Ishtar was the goddess of fertility and "patron saint" of the phallic cult, comparable to Aphrodite or Venus.

5. This entire scene portrays the abject degradation of Belshazzar and his court.

5.1 The utensils of gold and silver were part of the articles of Solomon's Temple and had been used by the Jews to teach the Gospel and to communicate Bible doctrine.

6. Belshazzar not only knew from where these bowls and basins came but also it would be logical to assume Daniel had communicated their meaning; therefore, the profane manner in which he utilized the sacred vessels reveals his total rejection of Jesus Christ.

7. In addition to the message taught by the Temple vessels, Belshazzar had heard the testimony of his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar.

7.1 This, too, he rebuffed, as demonstrated by his mockery and ridicule of the Lord of glory.

8. Heathenism and blasphemy had now reached its saturation point in the Chaldean Empire. For nearly a year, Cyrus of Persia had been swallowing up portions of Babylonia.

9. Now only the capital city remained intact. Bored and frustrated, but apparently feeling secure behind the great fortified walls, the king and his nobles became slaves to licentious living.

10. Long forgotten were the three great lessons from their own history, which should have taught them of the reality and power of the God of Israel!

11. Had not God alone been able to furnish Daniel the interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar when all the wise men of Chaldea failed?

12. Did the God of Israel not miraculously rescue Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from the fiery furnace?

13. Nebuchadnezzar himself, who had been dead only twenty-three years, had in his lifetime made an astonishing recovery from his zoanthropic malady, which was widely publicized as a healing from God!

13.1 Instead, the drunken king and his besotted courtiers ignored these manifestations of divine power and chose to rely instead on manmade walls and idols.

14. By drinking from the sacrificial cups, the entire group of revelers had elevated their pagan gods above Messiah!

15. Brazenly they blasphemed the Lord Jesus Christ because, in their stupidity, they mistook the administration of the fifth cycle of discipline of Israel for Jehovah's impotence.

16. Consequently, they failed to see themselves in the proper perspective as God's instrument for judgment on the Jews. In their vanity, they questioned His sovereignty and omnipotence.

Let's stop here for a moment and look at the Doctrine of Drinking.

1. Drinking is never prohibited in the Bible but drunkenness is always classified as a sin.

1.1 There are people who cannot drink and they are called alcoholics therefore E they should never ingest fermented beverages. The alcoholic will know if alcohol is his or her drug of choice.

2. People with wisdom abstain from their drug of choice, for those who do not, there is hell to pay.

3. People with alcoholism in their family should never try alcohol; there are however many alcoholics who stop early and there are many who unfortunately stop after reaching bottom. Some choose the sin-unto-death rather than abstinence.

3.1 Only mature adults should ever try alcohol; children are never to drink.

3.2 This doctrine is for the rest of us who are neither alcoholics nor children; for you see only mature people who are not alcoholics should ever drink and then in absolute moderation, and only then after knowing all the Bible has to say about the subject.

4. Drunkenness is always condemned as a sin.

Isa 5:11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine ...

Isa 5:22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks,

Rom 13:13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

Rom 13:14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Pro 20:1 Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.

1Co 5:11 But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

Eph 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

4.1 Notice the contrast of the filling of the Spirit which controls and drunkenness which controls.

4.1.1 Sins which relinquish the control of the mind can lead to demon control and this certainly includes any form of chemical addiction.

4.2 Drinking as used in this doctrine means "the consumption of fermented drink". (Oinos, Sikera, Gleukos, Shekar, Yayin and Tirosh)

4.3 Wine was the principle drink used by both Old and New Testament peoples although beer was commonly consumed in certain ancient societies.

4.3.1 Wine was made from various fruits certainly to include pomegranates and grapes. Strong drink was usually made from grains.

Son 8:2 I would lead you and bring you to my mother's house--she who has taught me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, the nectar of my pomegranates.

4.3.2 This "spiced wine" was a sweet intoxicating wine.

4.4 The word new wine in the Bible is a reference to fruit or juices which have not as yet either been harvested or were still fermenting. It was also used to describe "cheap wine" which was highly intoxicating.

Hag 1:11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands.

4.4.1 Here new wine means grapes not harvested.

4.4.2 Acts 2:13 and 15 are examples of Scripture where new wine is used to describe a very powerful wine. In verse 15 the words "not drunk" is a translation from the negative adverb Ouk with the verb Methuo.

Acts 2:13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine (Gleukos).

Acts 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

Acts 2:15 For these are not drunken (Methuo), as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

4.5 Old wine is used in Luke chapter five to describe a beverage which was fully aged and is therefore superior.

Luk 5:37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

Luk 5:38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

4.6 Wine or strong drink are recommended in certain cases for medicinal purposes.

4.6.1 Most medicines contain alcohol as a solvent and this certainly includes "Baptist tea" which is sold under various brand names, one such being Nyquil.

Pro 31:6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.

Pro 31:7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

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