

STANDING IN BABYLON

Devotional | February 19, 2023

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discuss: In what ways do you personally acknowledge and worship the God of the Bible as the one true God?

Key Text: Read *Daniel 4:1-37*

A large steel corporation, deciding it was time for a shake-up, hired a new CEO. The new CEO decided he would drive his employees hard and rid the company of all slackers. On a tour of the facilities, the CEO noticed a guy leaning against a wall. The room was full of workers and he wanted to show them he meant business. He asked the guy, "How much do you make a week? A little surprised, the young man looked at him and said, "I make \$300 per week. Why?" The CEO said, "Wait right here." He walked back to his office, came back in 2 minutes, and handed the guy \$1200 in cash and said, "Here's 4 weeks' pay. Now get out and don't come back." Feeling good about himself, the CEO looked around the room and asked, "Does anyone want to tell me what that goofball did here?" From across the room, a voice said, "He's the pizza guy who delivers our lunch. You just gave him a \$1200 tip!"

Pride certainly has a way of humbling us! King Nebuchadnezzar learned this lesson the hard way. In our text for today's lesson, Daniel 4:1-37, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream (his second of three dreams recorded in the Book of Daniel) and asked Daniel to interpret it as he had done previously (Chapter 2). Daniel explained the dream, telling the king that his pride would lead to humiliation, he would lose his mind, but he would be restored once he acknowledged God's sovereignty.

As you read and discuss Daniel 4:1-37, note that Nebuchadnezzar himself wrote this chapter, and it was preserved and incorporated into the God-inspired volume by Daniel.

1. Before recounting his dream, Daniel's interpretation, and the dramatic events that followed, Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the sovereignty and power of God. (4:1-3).

A few years had passed since the events of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and the fiery furnace occurred (Daniel 3). Daniel 4 begins (v.1-3) and ends (v.34-37) with Nebuchadnezzar offering praises to God. But in between, Nebuchadnezzar himself tells how God permitted Nebuchadnezzar to suffer great humiliation to learn more about God's greatness.

Nebuchadnezzar describes what he had witnessed of God as "*signs...and wonders*" (4:3). A "*sign*" is a miracle with a message, and a "*wonder*" is an act of God that causes amazement. All that Nebuchadnezzar would experience as recorded in Daniel 4 would, indeed, be a miracle with a message that would leave Nebuchadnezzar amazed!

Discuss: What key words and phrases about pride do you see in these verses: Psalm 10:4; Proverbs 8:13; 16:18-19; 1 Corinthians 4:7?

2. Nebuchadnezzar has a troubling dream which Daniel interprets (4:4-27).

- **Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (4:4-18)**

After his dream, Nebuchadnezzar calls upon his own so-called wise men to interpret it, but they were unable (4:1-7). So, the king calls in Daniel and tells the dream to Daniel (4:8). In his dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a large tree spreading out (4:9-12). Then he saw a messenger from heaven cut down the tree, and then say that it represents a man who will lose his mind and who will live like a wild animal for seven years (4:13-17). The king then asks Daniel to interpret the dream (4:18).

Discuss: Nebuchadnezzar went to Daniel, who would go to God for wisdom. How is God's wisdom different from worldly wisdom according to James 3:13-18?

- **Daniel's Interpretation (4:19-27)**

Daniel was troubled by Nebuchadnezzar's dream (4:19a) perhaps because he knew that bringing bad news to the king could result in falling from the king's favor, or maybe Daniel had developed a fondness for the king and did not want to see him suffer. The king could see this was difficult for Daniel, so he told Daniel not to fear but to tell the truth about the dream (4:19b). Daniel warned the king that the dream was not good news – he wished it was for the king's enemies, not for the king himself (4:19c)

Daniel identified the tree as Nebuchadnezzar who would suffer from God-caused insanity due to the king's pride. However, in seven years, after the king acknowledged God's power and sovereignty, the king's sanity and kingdom would be restored (4:20-26). Daniel urges King Nebuchadnezzar to repent (4:27).

Discuss: What are some key places to go to find sound wisdom, according to these verses: Psalm 19:7-8; Proverbs 15:22; James 1:5?

3. Nebuchadnezzar is humiliated for seven years, then repents and worships God (4:28-37).

That very night, refusing to repent, Nebuchadnezzar remains arrogant, boasting to everyone about his building of Babylon (4:28-30). As predicted in the dream, Nebuchadnezzar is given the mind of an animal for seven years (4:31-33). Upon receiving his right mind and his kingdom back, King Nebuchadnezzar praises and honors Yahweh (4:34-37).

Discuss: How does praising and honoring God help us keep a proper life perspective?

For Further Study:

Free online commentary on the Book of Daniel at www.enduringword.com

"How Did God Use Dreams and Visions in the Bible?" article at www.gotquestions.org

The Complete Book of Who's Who in the Bible by Philip Comfort and Walter Elwell