

“PRIDE AND PUNISHMENT”

Daniel 4

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INTRODUCTION

Have you had any interesting dreams lately. [Illus. My dream of dying and going to Heaven]

Please notice how the early chapters of Daniel manifest God’s dealings with the kingdoms of this world.

- Chapter 2: The Head of Gold of the huge statue.
- Chapter 3: The 90 foot tall statue of gold to whom men were to bow.
- Chapter 4—God’s personal dealings with the Head of gold.

In this chapter God deals with the Gentile world in its chief leader: Nebuchadnezzar.

This chapter is the precursor of Babylon’s downfall—cf. “Babylon the Great” in Revelation.

The chapter begins and ends with a doxology—praise to the God of Heaven.

He is great, and I am small.

- I. THE DREAM OF THE GREAT TREE (4-18)
 - A. Background of the Dream: Neby was “flourishing” as a tree and was “at rest.” (4)
 - B. Results of the Dream (5-9)
 1. The fearful king (5)—“kept alarming” him
 2. The fake interpreters (6-7)—Did he forget Daniel, or was he avoiding him? No, Daniel at first stayed away so that the frustration could come to a climax.
 3. The faithful Daniel (8-9, 18): In him is “the **Spirit of the Holy God.**” Thus, “no secret (mystery) troubles you.”
 - C. The Description of the Dream (10-14)
 1. The flourishing tree (10-12)—cf. Ezek. 31 (Assyria and Egypt) and other references.
 - Its height (10-11)
 - Its foliage (12a)
 - Its fruit (12b)
 - Its shade—shelter (12c)
 2. The chopped down tree (13-14)
 - a. The coming of the watcher (13) [cf. the eyes of the cherubim—Ezek. 1:18 and the “eyes of the Lord”—this is a “vigilant one”.
 - b. The command toward the tree (14; see 17a also)—the angels are agents of God’s judgment
 - Cut it down.
 - Scatter its dependents.
 3. The stump (15-16)
 - a. Roots with an iron and bronze band (15a)
 - b. Outward environment (15b)

- c. Inward change (16a)—the mind of a beast, no longer a man [cf. the “Babylonian beast in Revelation]
 - d. Time Factor (16b) [7 times=7 years—just as in revelation!]
Notice here that God judges and humbles him.
4. The Restored tree (17) [*Whose decree? The “watchers—holy ones” or “the Most High”—v. 24]*

II. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM (19-27)

- A. Daniel’s Dismay (19)
- B. Daniel’s Explanation (20-26)
 - 1. The Tree (20-22) [Neby and his majesty and dominion]
 - 2. The Decree (23-26)
 - Source: the Most High (24)
 - Humiliation of the king (25)
 - Preservation of the king (26)
 - Restoration of the king (25b, 26b)
 - “Heaven rules”—“the Most High Rules”
 - 3. Daniel’s advice (27): He does not say, “Redeem your sins by acts of charity.” The idea is: “Break away from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.”
 - *Maybe your period of tranquility will be lengthened.*
 - “Righteous deeds—fairness—and “mercy to the poor” are qualities sorely lacking in Neby and in most Gentile kings.

III. THE FULFILLMENT OF THE DREAM (28-33)

- A. The Calendar (28-29)—12 months later
- B. The Cause—“Babylon the Great”—cf. Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10)
We have inscriptions of 50 building projects, such as the “Hanging Gardens, palaces, temples.
 - Note: “I myself have built”
 - “house of the kingdom”=“A royal residence”]
 - “By the might of my power and for the honor (glory) of my majesty.”
- C. The Curse (31-32) [note that “a voice fell from Heaven” saying “the kingdom—sovereignty—is departed (removed) from you.”
 - **His action had been in practical defiance of God**; could it have been on the anniversary of His dream?
 - Here a word of doom comes to him instead of from him.
- D. The Condition (33)—Begins behaving and becoming in appearance as a **cow** or **ox**—a condition known as **Boanthropy** [cf. Lycanthropy—behaving like a wolf]
- E. The Conclusion (34b)
 - 1. His *reason* returned to him (34, 36)

2. His *honor and brightness* returned to him for the *glory of his kingdom* (36).
3. His *dependants* seek him out (36).
4. His sovereignty—kingdom
5. Excellent majesty--Surpassing greatness (36)

IV. THE LESSON OF THE DREAM (1-3; 34-37)

A. The Look in the Right Direction (34)—He “lifted up his eyes toward heaven”: such is the most notable differential feature between men and beasts.

B. The Recognition of the Most High: **blessed, praised, honored, exalted** (34, 37)
All of this shows his humble adoration and thankfulness and his personal dependency.

1. He “lives forever.” (34)

2. He Rules as the Sovereign (“King of Heaven”—37)

- Everlasting dominion (34)
- Everlasting kingdom (34)
- Universal sovereignty (35)—Earth and Heaven
Inhabitants of earth are as nothing
 Does according to His will in the host of heaven
 No one can “stop His hand”—lit. “strike against”
 No one can question Him—“What have you done?”

3. He acts Properly (37)

“His works are truth”; “His ways are justice” “He is able to abase” those “who walk in pride.”

CONCLUSION

The Main lesson learned: The “**sign**” of vv. 2 & 3 that brought such “**wonder**” (2 & 3)

“That the living might know (v. 17); that Nebuchadnezzar might know (v. 25); that the peoples and nations and languages might know (v. 1); that the Jews might know and be encouraged.

Know WHAT?

THAT GOD IS SOVEREIGN: vv. 3, 17, 25, 26, 32, 34, 35.

And, “He is able to humble those who walk in pride.” (37); but, once they are “lowly” (basest—in their own estimation) He lifts them up (17c)

“He is great but I am small.” [Sing it]

“His Name is Wonderful. . . . Bow down before Him, love and adore Him.”