

Part 9 — “The Most High God & the Pursuit of the Lost” — 24 July 2022

Introduction

From the time of his conquest of Judah and the bringing of captives from Jerusalem to Babylon, king Nebuchadnezzar had numerous direct interactions with God’s people. In Daniel’s interpretation of the king’s dream of the great image and in the deliverance of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, he had witnessed the power of the Most High God. Although he had paid homage to the God of Daniel and his friends, it remained for Nebuchadnezzar to be fully humbled before the God of Heaven in order that he might truly know and worship Him.

Main Point: Because the Most High God is merciful and gracious, He has _____ Himself to sinful humanity by His powerful Word and bears witness to Himself through His _____.

Nebuchadnezzar’s Second Dream & Its Interpretation—Daniel 4:1-27

The Testimony of Nebuchadnezzar (4:1-3)

Observations

1. The events of this chapter seem to have occurred towards the end of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign.
2. The introduction to this chapter indicates that it was written by Nebuchadnezzar as a form of personal _____.
“signs” *“wonders”*

Already/Not Yet: *“His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.”*

Key Point: The king had come to a place where he recognized his own _____ when compared with the Most High God.

“He had just been removed from, though later restored to, his throne, and would, like other kings, soon be removed permanently in death; but, in contrast, God would never be removed from His throne, and was rightly supreme over all earthly kingdoms.”

— Leon J. Wood, *Daniel*

Nebuchadnezzar’s Second Dream (4:4-17)

Observations

1. There are a number of similarities between these events and those described in Ch. 2, but also some differences:

Similarities:

Differences:

2. The king’s description of Daniel showed his recognition of his uniqueness among the wise men of Babylon.
“in whom is the spirit of the holy gods” *“chief of the magicians”*
3. The primary image that the king saw in the dream was a large tree:
4. The king then saw an angelic being that proclaimed a message of _____ over the tree.
“a watcher, a holy one”

⇒ The sentence was by the *decree* of ‘the watchers,’ a term that seems to refer to a council of angelic beings that stood before the Lord (Gen. 1:26; Ps. 82:1; 1 Kings 22:18-23; Job 1:6-12). These beings are involved in carrying out the will of God on the earth.

Key Point: The purpose of the sentence being carried out was so that the living would know that God is _____ over the kingdoms of the world and that one day He would establish His Kingdom under the rule of His chosen King.

“rules” - Mighty; having mastery [corresponding to Heb. For having authority (Gen. 42:6) or power over (Eccl. 8:8)]

“The point was that was clear to [the king]: he needed to humble himself before the one who granted him the authority to be king. The second part of the lesson was that “He will set over it the lowliest [*the most humble*] of men...The verb...often translated “He establishes”...could also be translated He will establish (or will set over)—future tense...[this] looks to the future when God will establish a ruler over the realm of mankind who is indeed the lowliest of men...” —J. Paul Tanner, *Daniel*

The Plea of the Nebuchadnezzar & the Response of Daniel (4:18-27)

Observations

1. The encouraging words of Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel and his words to the king are at the center of the account.

“all the wise men of my kingdom are not able...but you are able”

“may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies!”

2. Daniel then interpreted the _____ of the dream:

The Tree:

⇒ In the Wadi Brissa inscription, Nebuchadnezzar refers to Lebanon as “the lush, green forests of Marduk” and states “With my own clean hands I felled (the mighty cedars).”

“...the king boasts that he made the city into a mountain-high fortress. He goes on to state that he gathered all men to its shadow for their well-being, prosperity and blessing. His kingdom reached the ends of the earth and he raised the city of Babylon to its summit.”
- Paul Ferguson, “Nebuchadnezzar, Gilgamesh, & the Babylonian Job”

The Judgment Upon the Tree:

3. The repetition of the word ‘decree’ serves to illustrate the limitations of the king’s _____ when compared to ‘the Most High.’

⇒ The decree of ‘the watchers’ is synonymous with the decree of _____, thereby assuring that it would be carried out just as it was proclaimed and predicted.

4. Daniel then exhorted the king to acknowledge the _____ of the Most High and to rule righteously over Babylon in light of submitting to Him.

“break off your sins”

“[break off] your iniquities”

Key Point: The interpretation of the dream showed how God _____ the lost and the words of Daniel illustrate how God’s people are to appeal to them as His _____.

[The Wadi Barissa] inscription clearly shows how totally obsessed Nebuchadnezzar was with the mighty cedars of Lebanon. It is little wonder he dreamed about them. There would have been no more vulnerable point for God to speak to [the king] about his pride than through the metaphor of a great tree. He would have had little problem in identifying the sheltering, nourishing tree with his own kingdom.” - Paul Ferguson, “Nebuchadnezzar, Gilgamesh, & the Babylonian Job”

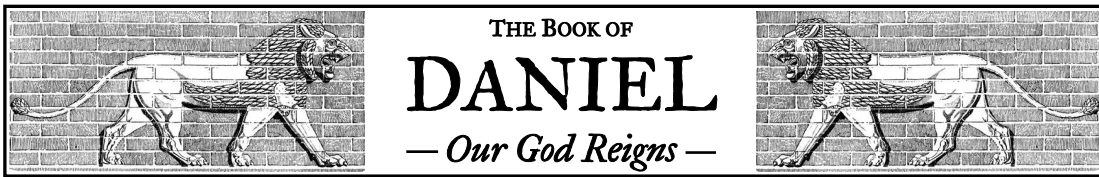
Living Faithfully in “Babylon”

- Because we are all prone to _____, we must consider the example of Nebuchadnezzar and the exhortations of Daniel,

1 Pet. 5:4-5—⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. ⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

- As we live in exile, we are called to share our Father’s _____ for the lost and to be His witnesses among them.

1 Pet. 3:8-9—⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.



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