

Daniel 4a – The Chapter

Nebuchadnezzar's Conversion

Daniel 4:1-3 *“Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. 2 I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God has wrought toward me. 3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.”*

Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people - Here in this chapter we are seeing a decree that Nebuchadnezzar is making to all people, nations, and languages, as he was the ruler of the world at this stage. So this entire chapter deals with this decree that shows the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar.

Signs and wonders - God had wrought many signs and wonders before him. They were the great vision of chapter 2 where he was shown from the kingdom of Babylon to the Second Coming of Christ. Also the mighty deliverance of the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace in chapter 3. Now we will see in this chapter another wonder performed by God to bring Nebuchadnezzar to a decision.

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom - Nebuchadnezzar freely acknowledges that God's kingdom is an everlasting one and that His dominion is from generation to generation.

Daniel 4:4-7 *“I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: 5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. 6 Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.”*

At rest...flourishing in my palace - Nebuchadnezzar was at rest, or in a state of security because of his success, and flourishing/prosperous as he had subdued Syria, Phoenicia, Judea, Egypt, and Arabia. Because of this security and prosperity he was slipping into a condition of laxness. We can guarantee that Satan was using this prosperity to keep him from God as we see in v30.

Dream which made me afraid...troubled me - It was at this time that God, in His mercy, gave him another dream. If you look through the book of Daniel, you will see God trying to draw Nebuchadnezzar to Himself, either through dreams or wonders performed before him.

This dream struck fear into him at a time when he was secure, and continued to trouble his mind and not give him any peace.

Therefore...decree to bring in all the wise men - Because it brought so much unrest to his mind, he made a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon. This was to have them give him the interpretation of the dream.

I told the dream before them - Unlike the dream of chapter 2, the king remembers this time what he has dreamt. Therefore he tells the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and the soothsayers what the dream was.

Did not make known unto me the interpretation - In chapter 2 the wise men begged the king to give them the dream and they would give the interpretation. Here the king gives them the dream and they still could not give the interpretation of it. God is still exposing the falsity of the counterfeit system to Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 4:8-9 *“But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying, 9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no secret troubleth you, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.”*

But at the last Daniel - At last Daniel has come in before the king. The king remembers Daniel and the abilities he has plus the position of being the master of the magicians. He is called this because he can give the answer of all secret things.

Spirit of the holy gods - Nebuchadnezzar says this about Daniel because it is Daniel's God that is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets. (Daniel 2:47)

Before him I told the dream - Before Daniel the king tells the dream and asks Daniel for the interpretation.

Daniel 4:10-12 *“Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. 11 The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: 12 The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.”*

Thus were the visions of mine head - In these two verses we have the first part of the vision, with the remainder of the vision in the verses following.

The king now proceeds to give the dream.

A tree - There are a number of things about this tree that we will now list below;

- *It was in the midst/centre of the earth.*
- *Height was great, or large in size.*
- *The tree was strong.*

- *It reached to the end of all the earth. So it covered the earth.*
- *Much fruit was upon the tree. It was abounding in food.*
- *There was meat/food for all. So it feed all for all flesh were fed of it.*
- *The beasts of the field dwelt under it and the fowl of the air dwelt in it.*

We will see the meaning of this when we look at the interpretation.

Daniel 4:13-17 “*I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; 14 He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: 15 Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: 16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. 17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.*”

I saw in the visions - Now the king continues on with the second part of the dream.

A watcher and an holy one - He now sees a watcher, or a holy one, come down from heaven. The word watcher used here refers to an angel in the original language. The angel is one who watches and looks on at the events taking place and obviously records them. It is he who comes down from heaven.

The watcher and the holy one are the same being. This we see from verse 17.

He cried aloud - It is the watcher that cried aloud to chop the tree down, cut off the branches, shake off the leaves, and to scatter his fruit. The beasts also and the fowls were to depart from it.

Leave the stump... - Even though the tree was to be cut down, the stump was to be left with a band of brass and iron around it and left in the field. It was to be wet with the dew of heaven, and the stumps portion was to be with the beasts in the grass of the earth.

Let his heart be changed - The stumps heart was to be changed from a man's to a beasts. This seems rather odd but the interpretation of the dream will bring clear understanding of the matter.

Seven times - The word time here comes from the Chaldean word ‘iddan’, which means a year. So seven years were to pass over the stump.

Decree of the watchers, and the demand of the holy ones - In this statement we find a repeat showing that the watcher and the holy one is the same person. Both words refer to an angel in the original language.

So it was the ever watchful recording angel that brought the decree down from heaven.

The intent that the living may know that the Most High... - This was all for the intention that the living may know that it is God that sets up kingdoms and rules in them, and sets over these kingdoms the basest/humblest of men.

Daniel 4:18-19 *“This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now you, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but you are able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in you. 19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spoke, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble you. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate you, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.”*

Belteshazzar declare the interpretation - The king wished for Daniel to give him the interpretation of it.

Forasmuch as all the wise men - He acknowledges that all his wise men in the realm are unable to give him the meaning, even after giving them the dream.

But thou art able - Nebuchadnezzar shows his confidence in Daniel to give the meaning because he knows that the true God is in Daniel.

Astonished for one hour - Daniel was taken back by the dream and was troubled. This was not because he could not give the interpretation but that the interpretation was not good news.

Let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee - The king wished to know the answer regardless of good or bad news.

The dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation... - The reason for the delay was that the news was not good for Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel's reply is one of telling the king that it would be better for this to come upon his enemies than upon himself.

Daniel 4:20-22 *“The tree that you sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; 21 Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: 22 It is you, O king, that are grown and become strong: for your greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and your dominion to the end of the earth.”*

The tree that thou sawest...it is thou - This tree that the king had seen in his dream was a description of himself.

Grown and become strong - It was Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, that had grown and become strong. It was regarded as the centre of the world and ruled over the world at this

present time. It was abounding in wealth and beauty, with almost an endless supply of food. She offered protection to all within her gates and was strong against all opponents at this time. Nebuchadnezzar ruled the kingdom in such a way to afford the fullest protection, support, and prosperity to all its subjects.

Daniel 4:23-27 “*And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; 24 This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: 25 That they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. 26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; your kingdom shall be sure unto you, after that you shall have known that the heavens do rule. 27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto you, and break off your sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of your tranquillity.*”

Now we move on to give the interpretation to the second half of the dream.

Decree of the Most High - The decree came from the God of heaven to hew down the tree. This decree came to Nebuchadnezzar through the watcher or the recording angel, and was upon the king himself.

Drive thee from men - Just as the tree was to be cut down and have his portion with the beasts, so to was Nebuchadnezzar to be cut down and driven from the presence of men, and dwell in the fields with the oxen and eat the grass as an ox.

Wet thee with the dew - As the tree was to be wet with the dew of heaven, so the king was to have dew fall upon from heaven.

Seven times - Seven years was to pass with Nebuchadnezzar in this position of being a beast of the field.

Till thou know - This was to be his condition until he could acknowledge that it was God that ruled in the kingdom of men and gave it to whom He will.

Leave the stump of the tree - We see God’s mercy mingled in with His judgment. The king’s rulership and kingdom would be preserved unto him until he acknowledged that the God of heaven rules. As the band of iron and brass was placed around the tree stump to preserve it and stop it from splitting, the kingdom would be preserved for Nebuchadnezzar to rule once again.

Let my council be acceptable - Daniel now wishes to give the king some council and asks him to accept it.

Break off thy sins by righteousness - Daniel does not ask the king to turn from his sinful ways but tells him to. He reproves the king for his course and calls him to repentance. So should we be allowing the word of God to cut deep into the heart and call those who are wondering from God to repentance.

If it may be a lengthening... - If he turned from his evil ways, the judgments of God could be averted. The conditions of this agreement was the condition of obedience.

Daniel 4:28-33 *“All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. 30 The king spoke, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? 31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from you. 32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make you to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. 33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.”*

End of twelve months - It took 12 months before his pride overran him whilst walking through the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

The king spake - The king had nothing but exaltation of himself in the words that he spoke. He gave all the glory to himself instead of God, Who had shown him that it was He Who set up kings and kingdoms. This same attitude we find in Satan. (Isaiah 14:12-14)

While the word - While he spoke the judgment of God was pronounced upon him. He who exalts himself shall be abased (Matthew 23:12, Obadiah 4) but if he had humbled himself, God could have exalted him.

The same hour - The judgment was carried out immediately. The condition of Nebuchadnezzar was like that of a beast of the field just as it was prophesied. This condition was to be for seven years, which at that time, he would acknowledge the God of heaven as the supreme ruler over all.

Daniel 4:34-37 *“And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: 35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest you? 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. 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.”
At the end of the days - At the end of the seven years.

Understanding returned - As his understanding returned at the end of the seven years, Nebuchadnezzar blessed, praised, and honoured the God of heaven that liveth forever. He acknowledges that it is His kingdom and dominion that is everlasting.

Reputed as nothing...what doest thou - We are but dust, or nothing compared to God. He does according to His will and who are we to bring all the glory upon ourselves and tell God what to do. (Romans 9:20, Job 38-39)

At the same time - Nebuchadnezzar was fully restored to his position with all his counsellors and so forth. God could restore him to this position because the king had been humbled. (1 Peter 5:6)

Whose works are truth - All of God’s works are truth and righteousness. (Deuteronomy 32:3-4 Psalms 98:2) We also see the lengths that God will go to, to bring about the conversion of a soul. He knew what it would take to bring Nebuchadnezzar to the point of following Him, and humbling him so as to separate the pride from his life that was impeding his relationship with God.

We believe Nebuchadnezzar died a converted man as this is the last record of his life. God wishes for each of us to come to Him so that He can exalt us in due season. Do not despair with the trials, turn to God the source of power and life.

SN HASKELL: THE STORY OF DANIEL THE PROPHET

When Babylon fell, the principles by which she had controlled others were in turn applied to her. Wherever there is tyranny in government in any nation of earth to-day, it is an offshoot of that root which filled the earth, the stump of which was allowed to remain until the end of time. {1901 SNH, SDP 54.1}

Wherever Babylon laid her hand in conquest, the principles of her religion were implanted. The vilest forms of worship were practiced in that kingdom with all its outward glory. The heart was rotten. The mystery of iniquity held full sway, hidden by the outward glitter of gold. The mysteries of Greece in a later day were but a repetition of the Babylonian mysteries. From the golden cup which she held in her hand, and which was a familiar symbol in Babylonian secret societies, she made all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication. {1901 SNH, SDP 54.2}

Nations and peoples to-day, unconscious of their origin, are perpetuating Babylonian religious customs when they celebrate Christmas with feasting, lighted candles, holly, and mistletoe. It is in commemoration of Babylonian heathen gods that they eat eggs on Easter, and even the wild capers of Hallowe'en repeat the mysteries of Babylon. The root was not destroyed; her

religious principles have sprung up afresh in every generation and borne fruit in every country. {1901 SNH, SDP 55.1}

The influence of Babylon in educational lines was no less marked than her influence in government and religion, and the educational root of the tree was as vigorous as the others. We are in the habit of tracing the educational system of the world to Greece or Egypt; its principles are older than Greece. They belong to Babylon. The prominence given this phase of Babylonian life by the Spirit of God in the book of Daniel, and the fact that the leading educators and educational institutions of the world were brought in direct contact with the more simple principles of true education every time the Hebrews met the Chaldeans and wise men, shows the place which education occupies both in the false kingdoms of which Babylon is a type, and in the true, which the Hebrews represented. The so-called "higher education" of to-day, which exalts the science of the world above the science of salvation; which sends forth students bearing worldly credentials, but not recognized in the books of heaven, students who love display, who are filled with pride, selfishness, and self-esteem,-this education is a plant which has sprung from that broad root which supported the tree representing the Babylonian dominion. {1901 SNH, SDP 55.2}

Blessings