

Doing hard things well

Daniel 4:1-37

- Daniel chapter four is the last in which we hear from King Nebuchadnezzar, many think because of this testimony that we will see him in glory. At this point Daniel has been in Babylon for at least thirty years, he is probably around fifty years old, Nebuchadnezzar has roughly a year left on the throne, he has conquered everything and everyone around him and now at the end of his reign this is what he has to say.

V1-37

- **V1-3** here is a testimony from the king himself of what he has personally witnessed, seen and experienced concerning The Most High God Jehovah. As great a king and kingdom Nebuchadnezzar thought himself and Babylon to be, in this chapter he recognizes that God is far Greater for He has an everlasting Kingdom.
- Remember Nebuchadnezzar is an idolator, and comes from an idolatrous family and culture, being polytheistic having gods for various purposes and believing that some are above others, but here he is declaring that there is only One True God. At the beginning of the chapter we see this is written in the first person, so this is his story to all peoples, nations, and languages, he wants everyone to know his story.
- I don't want us to miss this very important point, Satan desires us to experience the wonders of God, the miraculous provisions and blessings that he gives us, and think of them as routine, thus causing us to be silent to the world around us. But Nebuchadnezzar says he thought it good to declare "the signs and wonders that God has done for him" if he can say this how much more should we be speaking up?
- But that's part of doing hard things well, its not easy to tell someone who notices how nice your car, home or garden looks, how neat your clothes are, how polite your kids seem to be, that it's the Lord, so if there is anything that seems good in my life, or about me, it has nothing to do with me its all The Lord > **Ps 16:2**- nothing good apart from God, **Jam 1:17**- every good gift comes from The Lord, The Father of Lights

- **V4-9** Nebuchadnezzar says as he was at rest in his home, enjoying all that he believed he'd accomplished on his own, another dream occurs, and it troubled him, seeing visions that greatly disturbed his contentment. He calls for his wisemen, magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers, to give him the interpretation of the dream. This time he doesn't make them tell him the dream and then give the interpretation, he'd learned earlier they couldn't do that, so he tells them the dream.
- Even after telling them the dream they still couldn't give the interpretation, until Daniel his trusted advisor comes in and hears the dream. Notice he shares Daniel's Babylonian name, meaning prince or son of bel, their false god, but he's come to understand that Daniel serves not his god, but The Holy God, in which The Spirit of God speaks in and through him, Holy means set apart, so unlike his false gods.
- As we read his I have a question: Why do we repeat the thing that led to disaster and expect different results? But that's how we are, the king asks his wisemen who failed him before for help and when they couldn't then he calls for Daniel, who he admits to knowing that he serves The True God, that's apart from his false gods, and is a revealer of secrets. So why didn't he save himself some time and seek them first?
- **V10-14** the tree is so big that all the beasts of the earth could gather underneath it, so it's noted for its size, strength, prominence, beauty, fruit, and shelter. Notice it has many leaves, an abundance of fruit, and its height was such that you could see it from any point on earth. **V13** a watcher appears and proclaims cut down the tree, trim the branches, strip the leaves off, and scatter the animals and birds.
- **V15-18** remember Nebuchadnezzar has constructed a city made from gold, it has the hanging gardens of Babylon one of the eight wonders of the world, its magnificence is known throughout the world, and yet he sees in this vision something that has him perplexed, confused, not only for its vastness but also for its demise. The seemingly immovable tree is cut down but not completely destroyed as a stump is left, so a remnant is still there so that one day it can be restored.
- At the end of the dream Nebuchadnezzar says these things happened so that whomever its meant for may know that the One Who allowed these things wanted him to know that He is The Most High and rules in the kingdom of men, and sets over it the lowest of men. The King then asks of Daniel can you interpret this dream for me since everyone I've asked cannot, for I know the Spirit of The Holy God is in you.

- **V19-27** Daniel seemed to genuinely care for Nebuchadnezzar, as he sits speechless for an hour, and after the king encouraged him to speak Daniel says “**I wish this dream was not to you but for your enemies**”. Daniel could have said “after all the chances the Lord gave you, and you wouldn’t listen this serves you right”. But you can sense a tenderness in Daniel’s response to the king.
- Remember in **Lk 19:41**- Jesus wept over Israel’s sin, we need to be just as compassionate and not so dispassionate over the sinful state of people. **V22** Daniel tell him the tree is him, and speaks of how powerful and important he had become, but also how prideful as well, so much so The Lord planned to humble him.
- The trimming and cutting down symbolizes disgrace and removal from the throne for taking credit for his accomplishments and vastness of Babylon. Leaving the stump says restoration was still available for him if he humbles himself and acknowledges it is The Lord Who rules and reigns and not man. **V27** afterward Daniel counsels him to repent before any of these things happen but sadly he doesn’t.
- **V28-33** God gave the King a year to change his ways but as usual > **Eccl 8:11**- comes into play, and as he surveys the magnificence of all that he sees and begins to take the credit for it all God’s Word comes into fruition. A voice from heaven interrupts his egotistical rant and immediately his mind is gone and judgement takes over. For seven years he is driven from men, eating grass like an animal.
- God is so patient and merciful giving him a whole year to avoid this, just as He gave the world one hundred and twenty years to turn from their sins when Noah built the Ark, and gave the city of Jerusalem almost forty years of grace after they crucified Jesus before the Romans came and burned the city and destroyed the temple.
- **V34-37** Nebuchadnezzar could not break free from his madness until God appointed the “end of time” then he humbles himself and lifts his eyes to heaven. This elicits praise and not pride, as He blesses The Most High, praising and honoring Him. Notice Nebuchadnezzar could only see the truth about himself once he saw the truth about God. Then he is restored, learning **Prov 16:18, Jam 4:6**. In ancient times Kings never wrote of their defeats but only of their conquests, this is God.