

In the Fire Part 5

Announcement: Biblical Citizenship Class

Daniel 4 NIV

King Nebuchadnezzar,

To the nations and peoples of every language, who live in all the earth:

May you prosper greatly!

2 It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.

3
How great are his signs,
how mighty his wonders!
His kingdom is an eternal kingdom;
his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Vs. 1 NLT

King Nebuchadnezzar sent this message to the people

- The opening of this chapter is the testimony of a Gentile king and how God is changing his heart. Nebuchadnezzar is beginning to be a witness for the Lord (one who shares what he has seen and heard).

Vs. 4-5

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. **5** I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me.

- Nebuchadnezzar may have never considered himself much of a dreamer until now...

- This is the second dream that has shaken him to the point where he was greatly disturbed...
- God will cause a dream and use it to awaken the soul to a sober reality, and when he does, it is because he is gracious...
- It is the grace of God to shake the king and awaken him...

Vs. 6-18

6 So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. **7** When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. **8** Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

9 I said, “Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me. **10** These are the visions I saw while lying in bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. **11** The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. **12** Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the wild animals found shelter, and the birds lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.

13 “In the visions I saw while lying in bed, I looked, and there before me was a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven. **14** He called in a loud voice: ‘Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. **15** But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field.

“Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. **16** Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times (years) pass by for him.

17 “The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.’

18 “This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means, **for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me.** But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

- This part is interesting to me...
- The king’s approach to this dream is very different than the one in Ch. 2
- Just like in Ch.2 the king goes to the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners first...
- This time the king shares the dream openly and in detail...
- Do you remember what they said to the king the first time?

Daniel 2:7 *“Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”*

- Now the King comes to Daniel and says:

Vs. 18

for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me.

So what’s the issue now?

- The magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners fear the king... but Daniel fears the Lord...

I'm pretty sure the first time I ever read Daniel 4 I thought to myself, Oh dude sounds like your the tree, and your coming down...

Leonard Ravenhill - "He who fears God fears no man."

Because Daniel feared the Lord, he was fit to serve the Lord
Because Daniel feared the Lord, he was fit to serve the King...

It takes courage to serve the Lord...

Joshua 1:9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and **courageous**. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

1 Chronicles 28:20

David also said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and **courageous**, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you.

Acts 4:13

When they saw the **courage** of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Acts 23:11

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take **courage!** As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

1 Corinthians 16:13

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be **courageous**; be strong.

The word Coward is found 1 time in the Bible

Revelation 21:8 NKJV

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable (or vile), murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers (those who practice magic arts), idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt — *“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear.”*

I saw a T-shirt that said: *“Being a Christian isn’t easy, but the retirement plan is Amazing!”*

Vs. 19-22

19 Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.”

Belteshazzar answered, “My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! **20** The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, **21** with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the wild animals, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds— **22** **Your Majesty, you are that tree!** You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

23 “Your Majesty saw a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live with the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.’

24 “This is the interpretation, Your Majesty, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: **25** You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes.

26 The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. **27 Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice:** Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”

Vs. 19

Then Daniel was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him.

- Daniel understood the gravity of what the Lord is trying to tell the king...
- Daniel also understood this was not an easy word to share with the most powerful man in the world at that time...
- This is why he graciously communicates when he says “My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries!”

Nevertheless Daniel is faithful to the Lord when he says:

Vs. 22

Your Majesty, you are that tree!

Vs. 27

Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed.

- What a day at work for Daniel...

- He got the privilege of advising the king to repent and turn from sin...

Daniel knows:

Psalm 145:8

The Lord is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.

Let me just share this:

- Daniel is a good minister because he honors the word of the Lord...
- He doesn't add to or take away from what God is saying...
- Daniel is a good minister because he echos what God is already saying, he doesn't contradict it or smooth it over...
- Then he advises in the way of humility and repentance in hopes of saving the king from such calamity...

Vs. 27

Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice:

Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”

How does this apply to today:

- How many are declaring the works of God, but living in sin...
- Just like King Nebuchadnezzar, the first step is to recognize and worship God...
- The next step is what Daniel advises, **Renounce your sins by doing what is right...**

Vs. 28-37

28 All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. **29** Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, **30** he said, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?”

31 Even as the words were on his lips, a voice came from heaven, “This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. **32** You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes.”

33 Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

34 At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever.

His dominion is an eternal dominion;
his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

35

All the peoples of the earth
are regarded as nothing.

He does as he pleases
with the powers of heaven
and the peoples of the earth.

No one can hold back his hand
or say to him: “What have you done?”

36 At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. **37** Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

- Nebuchadnezzar couldn't see the truth about himself until he saw the truth about God...

One of the most powerful verses in the Bible:

Daniel 4:37

And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

- When the King raised his eyes towards heaven, at the end of the time appointed, he was restored and praised God eloquently...
- When the King raised his eyes towards heaven: it says God restored his sanity, his honor and his splendor...
- Nebuchadnezzar's story is proof that sanity and a sound mind is a gift from God...

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

- The king himself testifies... Vs. 36 "...and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before."