

DANIEL

Chapter 4 -Notes

Summary

- Nebuchadnezzar once again has another troubling dream, in which only Daniel is able to interpret. In the dream it is revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that his kingship will be stripped from him, and he shall be made like one of the beasts of the field for a set period of time. Nevertheless, his kingdom will be preserved, and he will subsequently be restored once he learns to honor The Most High God. After a period of 12 months, the dream is fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar acts boastfully. In the end, Nebuchadnezzar humbles himself and comes to worship the true God of Heaven and Earth.

Purpose in Writing

- This account is given to us in Nebuchadnezzar's own hand, and is presented in the first person. Nebuchadnezzar provides a type of forward and afterword which details his intent in writing. It is a type of kingly decree, likely circulated throughout the empire, serving as a personal testimony for all to see and understand that the God of the Jews, "The Most High God," He is the true king of heaven and earth, and to him is all praise and honor due. Furthermore, it is only He who can and may grant peace and prosperity in abundance.

Images in the Dream

- A large and flourishing tree providing for many in creation
- A watcher/holy one (or "wakeful one")
- Tree being chopped down and scattered

- A stump bound by iron and bronze with its roots intact
- Dew of heaven
- Eating grass/plants
- Becoming beastly
- 7 “periods” of time

Imagery Connections

- Trees
 - Trees are a huge theme in Scripture. Psalm 1 speaks of the man who becomes like a tree. The two trees in the garden. Ezekiel speaks of the fall of Assyria utilizing language nearly identical to Daniel 4. Lots of rulers and noble men in scripture establish themselves before or around great trees. Prophetic imagery of the “stump and shoot of Jessi.” Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God being like a mustard seed that becomes a great tree, and likens the judgement of Israel and the wicked to being trees with axes “laid at their roots.” Jesus is crucified upon a tree.
- Dew of Heaven
 - We must think of waters of judgement and baptismal waters. Concepts of being judged but also being made new.
- Eating grass/plants
 - Adam and Eve ate plants in the garden. Daniel and his friends resolve only to eat plants at the start of their exile. This gets at a type of fasting, for the purpose of drawing near to God, and learning to be dependent on Him.
- Becoming Beastly

- Adam and Eve, when they are exiled, are clothed with animal skins, as beasts, and sent away. To be a man, to be a king, is to have dominion over the beasts. To become a beast is to be dominated. You have become as the serpent, a beast of the field, lowly and humiliated.
- 7 Periods of Time
 - We may think of creation week, or the number of completion. New creation. Nebuchadnezzar is being recreated.
- Creation and De-creation in the Dream
 - The dream is divided in two by the repetition of the phrase “these were the visions in my head as I lay on my bed.” The first describes the great tree and kingdom that is Nebuchadnezzar, and the second describes his destruction. First you’re looking up, but then the image draws your mind down.

Christ in the Text

- Christ is the true king appointed by God. He is the shoot of the stump of Jessi, who will grow into a great and marvelous king, taking for himself a kingdom in which all the creatures of creation will seek to find rest, shade, and sustenance. He is literally hung from a tree, and it is in coming under that tree that we draw near to God, and find true peace and life in abundance.

Application Points

- Just because things may be going “well” for us does not mean we are doing “well.”
- It is the duty of even civil authorities to “kiss the Son” and honor Christ.
- God is merciful, and often grants warnings and opportunities for repentance.

- It is good for Christians to have the ear of secular rulers and authorities, and for us to unabashedly stand on the Word of God and call everyone to repentance, faith, and obedience.
- All civil powers and authorities are given their rule by God. However, He still expects them to rule and govern by His commands.
- Christians should be identifiable as having a “Spirit of the Holy God” within them.
- True peace, prosperity, splendor, and earthly glory is given to the humble, and those who wish and seek to glorify God and others.

