

## Taming the Wild Beast, Part 2

### Daniel 4

#### III. The King's Clarification (vv. 19 – 27)

Nebuchadnezzar wasn't the only one "alarmed" by this "dream." Daniel understood the meaning of the dream at once and was completely "dismayed." He was *horrified* by the dream's "bad news." And "his thoughts" rendered him speechless "for a while."

Daniel was so visibly shaken by this dream, and the coming judgment on the king, that Nebuchadnezzar took notice. Why was Daniel so shaken? Because he believed God's revelation. Daniel believed everything in the dream would come to pass. In fact, the implication of the dream was so horrible that at the end of **verse 19**, Daniel said he wished it applied to Nebuchadnezzar's "enemies" and not to him. Daniel cared.

Daniel's unwavering belief in the reality of God's judgment led him to have compassion on a hardened, ruthless, heathen, king. And we must ask ourselves the question, "Do we believe in the reality of God's judgment? Do we believe in the reality of hell?" (**Mark 9:48; Luke 13:28; Heb. 10:31**). Well, if you believe those things, do you care? Do you care so much that you take advantage of opportunities, not only to speak of the bad news of God's judgment, but also the good news of Christ and His offer of salvation?

Daniel is a wonderful example of speaking the truth in love – even when facing the most unlikely, God-rejecting, hardened sinner, like Nebuchadnezzar.

In **verses 20 – 22**, Daniel confirms what the king already suspected. "The tree" in the dream was Nebuchadnezzar himself. Like this "tree," Nebuchadnezzar had become great and "strong." In fact, his kingdom had grown and expanded to become greater than any kingdom up to that time. In so many ways, his kingdom had become "beautiful" and prosperous. Nebuchadnezzar had worked hard to achieve it. Everything he had he believed he had *earned*. Everything he had he believed he *deserved*. He believed all the glory for his success and "greatness" belonged to himself.

In **verses 23 – 24**, we learn that just as "the tree" was chopped down and brought low, and just as "the tree" was stripped of its *beauty* and *usefulness*, so too will the king be.

The outcome of the dream is fixed. Daniel says, "the interpretation...is a decree of the Most High." "The Most High" is a rather unique name for God. It is used six (6) times in this chapter. In **verse 2**, there is a slightly different form, "the Most High God." In **Gen. 14:18, 19** the name is explained. It means that God is the Creator, Owner, and Ruler of both heaven *and* earth. And the implication is that Nebuchadnezzar is not!

In **verse 25**, we learn the king will be removed from his position of authority "and driven from among men." Earlier, in **verse 12**, we were told "the beasts of the field found shade" under "the tree" of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. But now, the king himself will be humiliated to the point where he will join these "beasts" in their search for shelter and food.

This is certainly a rough way to teach the king a lesson. But in His wisdom, God knew that every ounce of this humiliation was needed to bring Nebuchadnezzar to repentance. God never acts randomly. There is a purpose and a plan for everything He does. The truth is, sometimes we must eat with the pigs before we come to our senses.

If you have friends or loved ones who are living on their high horse. If they are making themselves out to be the god of their life, then you must pray that God will bring them to the end of themselves in order that He might bring them home to their heavenly Father.

The “command to leave the stump” in **verse 26** means that though the judgment would be harsh, it wouldn’t kill the king. The “band of iron and bronze” mentioned in **verse 23** will protect the stump and its roots from being destroyed. Once the lesson has been learned, God will graciously restore the kingdom to Nebuchadnezzar.

In **verse 27**, Daniel boldly and courageously calls the king to repent. It seems the success and greatness of Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom had come at the expense of the poor. His pride had resulted in their being “oppressed.” Therefore, Daniel called for Nebuchadnezzar to confess his sin and turn his back on them.

#### **IV. The King’s Humiliation (vv. 28 – 33)**

God had been patient with Nebuchadnezzar for a very long time. Yet, even as Nebuchadnezzar persisted in his sin for years on end, God was patient with him for another “twelve months” after the dream.

That is, until one day, when “King Nebuchadnezzar...was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon.” From the high vantage point of the roof of his “palace” he could look in every direction and see his magnificent achievements. As he did so, his heart swelled with pride, and he was filled with self-importance.

In **verse 30**, Nebuchadnezzar gave all the glory to himself – glory that rightly belonged to “the Most High God.”

In **verses 31 – 33**, God turned Nebuchadnezzar over to the lusts of his heart. And the beast-like condition of his heart became an outer reality in his life. God removed every restraint, and the king lost his mind. He was “driven from” everything he exalted in. “Driven” from power. “Driven” from wealth. “Driven” from fame. He became stark raving mad. And as promised Nebuchadnezzar lived, ate, thought, and acted like “the beasts.”

This is what happens when you think too highly of yourself. Last year, we learned in our Genesis study that men are created in God’s image. This image is what sets human beings apart from animals. When people and nations deny God, they deny the image of God, and become like animals. You can’t help but see this in our world today. The farther man drifts from God, the more beast-like man becomes.

Therefore, may we be faithful, bold, and compassionate as we strive to be ambassadors for Christ, proclaiming the truth of the gospel, both the bad news and the good news – in love – to those who will listen.

#### **V. The King’s Regeneration (vv. 34 – 37)**

For all his life, Nebuchadnezzar had been looking around at those things he believed he had accomplished. But now, in **verse 34**, after seven years of living like a wild animal, the king finally looked **up**. He “lifted” his “eyes to heaven, and” his “reason returned to” him (**Psalm 121:1, 2**). And when Nebuchadnezzar looked up, God had mercy. God **Tamed the Wild Beast** in Nebuchadnezzar’s heart, and the king’s heart of pride gave way to a heart of praise.

In **verses 35 – 37**, we learn that God preserved Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom and returned everything to him. It seems that Nebuchadnezzar’s son or Daniel (or both) kept the kingdom operational until Nebuchadnezzar’s sanity returned.

Therefore, may Nebuchadnezzar’s story be an encouragement to us that God’s right arm of salvation is not so short that He can’t save the greatest of sinners. Hallelujah! What a Savior!