



Part 4: Even Kings Can Change

Sunday, May 10, 2020

⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart; **do not depend on your own understanding.**⁶ Seek his will in all you do, and **he will show you which path to take.** Proverbs 3:5-6

Have you ever thought that you do not need God in a particular situation and that you can handle it? For King Nebuchadnezzar to see his need for God, he had to be humbled. God draws close to the humble and opposes the proud.

Up to this point, the King never referred to the God of Daniel as His God. (Ch.1. The firm resolve and unusual aptitude of Daniel and friends, Ch. 2, vs. 47, "Your God," Ch.3 vs. 29, "Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego" He needed to get to the point where he can say, the Most High God is **my** God. The profession of faith does not always mean possession. We will need to get to this point. He can not just be the God of my parents, neighbors, or friends.

1. Stand Firm, Trust in the Lord. (Daniel 4:1-18)

- God humbled King Nebuchadnezzar to get him to the point where the King could testify that Most High God rules over the whole world.

The implications for Daniel 4 are clear: Nebuchadnezzar's dream shows that he identifies himself with the cosmic tree; he is the keeper of the cosmos, the true image of God, the Perfect Man.¹

- God uses events to show He rules over this world. Often in very humbling ways.
- Be careful of whom or where you put your trust? Is it you? Is it someone else? God?
- **My only hope** is to put my trust in the Most High God!

*For this has been decreed by the messengers; it is commanded by the holy ones, so that everyone may know that **the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world. He gives them to anyone he chooses—even to the lowliest of people.***" Daniel 4:17

2. Stand Firm, Do Not Depend On Your Understanding, but in What God Declares is True. (Daniel 4:19-27)

- It is difficult when what we believe is in conflict with the rest of the culture around us.
- Vs. 19< Notice the respect Daniel has for the King.

This is the message of judgment that confronts Nebuchadnezzar, but it is a conditional message. Daniel's advice is to avoid sin and be kind. In other words, he should not fall prey to the temptation to think himself a god. In spite of his greatness, he must retain his humility.²

²⁶*But the stump and roots of the tree were left in the ground. This means that you will receive your kingdom back again **when you have learned that heaven rules.*** ²⁷*"King Nebuchadnezzar, please accept my advice. **Stop sinning and do what is right.** Break from your wicked past and be merciful to the poor. Perhaps then you will continue to prosper. Daniel 4:26-27*

- Notice, God allowed Him to repent and to change his ways.

3. Stand Firm, Seek His will, and He will show you the path to take. (Daniel 4:28-33)

*While the narrative gives an immediate report of Nebuchadnezzar's fall, we learn from verse 29 that a period of **twelve months** passed before the crucial moment. We are perhaps to understand that the dream and its interpretation frightened Nebuchadnezzar into temporary compliance. Or perhaps he pretty much continued his sinful (v. 27) course, but God waited until this moment of monumental pride to exercise his judgment. We cannot be sure.³*

¹ Longman, T., III. (1999). *Daniel* (p. 119). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

² Longman, T., III. (1999). *Daniel* (p. 120). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

³ Longman, T., III. (1999). *Daniel* (p. 121). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

³⁰ As he looked out across the city, he said, 'Look at this great city of Babylon! **By my own mighty power, I have built this beautiful city** as my royal residence to display my majestic splendor.' Daniel 4:30

- Do not be wise in your own eyes. Do you love to use "I and Me" in sentences?

¹⁸ *Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall. Proverbs 16:18*

- *The emptiness of human wisdom and accomplishments. Culture will tell you to need to look to political leaders, the rich, scholars, or famous people for understanding to answer spiritual questions and difficult questions of life and to seek deliverance. Nebuchadnezzar should have remembered the past. Wealth and power in by themselves lead to emptiness.*
- Ask God to reveal to you what He knows, not what you know.

Nebuchadnezzar's description as a grotesque beast suggests a mental disease known as zoanthropy ("animal-man")—more specifically in this text boanthropy ("ox-man"). It is reminiscent of the ancient Sumerian Enkidu in the Gilgamesh Epic and the Aramaic story of Ahiqar in exile, who experience symptoms similar to Nebuchadnezzar's, causing them to be alienated from their worlds. Though a cuneiform text alludes to a personal problem of Nebuchadnezzar's that resulted in his son Awel-Marduk temporarily ruling in his place, it is too fragmentary for us to draw firm conclusions.³⁴

- God humbled Nebuchadnezzar to show that God almighty is Lord, not him. No matter how important you believe you are, self-centeredness will push God right out of your life. Do not allow your success to cause you to forget God.

³⁷ "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and **he is able to humble the proud.**" Daniel 4:37

One Last Thought: Maybe the purpose of this pandemic is for you to humble yourself and for you to see your great need for him.

⁴ Pierce, R. W. (2015). [Daniel](#). (M. L. Strauss & J. H. Walton, Eds.) (pp. 78–79). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.