


St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Adult Bible Study - November/December 2024
The Book of Daniel - Study Guide (continued)

Lesson Five: Nebuchadnezzar's Boast and His Madness (Daniel 4)

- 1) What is the basic message of the book of Daniel?
 - Daniel 4 expresses the same truth as the previous chapters; it is a truth repeated throughout the book.
 - In Daniel 4 the truth is expressed from the mouth of a heathen king rather than from the mouths of believers such as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. It is a message that the heathen people of Babylon needed to hear. Therefore, God let them hear it in their own language (Aramaic) and from the mouth of their leader, King Nebuchadnezzar.

- 2) How can we tell the message of Daniel 4 is an edict, or a royal proclamation? (Daniel 4:1-3)
 - Is it surprising that a proclamation that glorifies the "Most High God" came from Nebuchadnezzar?
 - What role might have been played by Daniel in the proclamation of this edict?

- 3) God gave Nebuchadnezzar another dream (Daniel 4:4-7).
 - How was this dream (and the king's reaction to it) similar yet different from his dream of the statue from Daniel 2?
 - Since Daniel had explained the king's first dream, why was he not the first to be called to interpret his second dream?

- 4) What were the details of the first part of the dream? (Daniel 4:8-12)
 - The tree symbolizes _____ (see Daniel 4:22).
 - What was God's purpose in establishing Nebuchadnezzar as king and making his kingdom beautiful, mighty, and powerful? (see Romans 13:4 and 1 Timothy 2:2)

- 5) What part of the dream terrified Nebuchadnezzar? (Daniel 4:13-18)
 - What was the role of the holy messenger from heaven?
 - How was it made clear that the king himself was the tree that would be cut down?
 - What humbling experience would the king endure?
 - What were those who witnessed this judgment, or decision (also called "the verdict") to understand from the dream and its fulfillment? (see Daniel 4:17)

- 6) Daniel's interpretation of the dream (Daniel 4:19-23).
 - Note Daniel's concern over his task of giving Nebuchadnezzar an honest interpretation; also, note the king's confidence in and respect for Daniel (see Daniel 4:19).
 - What is the significance of the fact that the stump was to remain in the field? (Daniel 4:23)

- 7) Daniel explains the dream and offers Nebuchadnezzar a ray of hope (Daniel 4:24-27).
 - What hope did Daniel offer? (Daniel 4:26)
 - When would the king's understanding and sanity return to him? (Daniel 4:27)

8) The fulfillment of the dream (Daniel 4:28-33).

- How is it evident that Nebuchadnezzar ignored, or forgot about, Daniel's warning? How much time passed?
- Was ancient Babylon outwardly "something to brag about"? (Jeske, p. 83)
- What was wrong with the king's words spoken from the roof of his royal palace? (Daniel 4:30)
- See the words of the Apostle Paul that remind us of truths that Nebuchadnezzar had ignored (1 Corinthians 4:7).
- How was judgment announced to Nebuchadnezzar? (Daniel 4:31)
- How long did it take for God to carry out his announced judgment? (Daniel 4:33) How long would God's judgment last?
- Note another message from Scripture (Psalm 2:10-11) that is a warning to those who "serve the Lord" in a high office.
- How was it possible that the empire survived the madness of their king?

9) The king's sanity is restored (Daniel 4:34-37).

- What change in the king's attitude did Daniel note? (Daniel 4:34)
- Does Nebuchadnezzar's prayer indicate that he had come to faith in the true God? (Jeske, p. 87) Even though the king acknowledged God's justice and sovereignty, what was still lacking?
- It might be said that Nebuchadnezzar needed to "practice what he preached." Is it difficult for powerful people to place themselves humbly under the authority of others (including God)?
- Although the message of Daniel 4 was aimed at the people of Babylon as well as its king, there are times when unbelieving people "suppress the truth" even when it is right before their eyes. When this happens, they reject God's call to repentance (see Romans 1:18-20).

10) What lessons are there in Daniel 4 that apply to the leaders, people, and nations of the 21st century?

Summary of Lesson 5 and Daniel 4

Daniel chapter four records Nebuchadnezzar's journey from rebellion to praise, a hard path marked by humiliation. Alistair Beck comments in his bible study "The King of Heaven" (based on Daniel 4), "God does not relent in his gracious pursuit of sinners, but brings people face to face with his greatness so that they can appreciate their need (for his mercy). The wonder of the gospel is that this God, who is sufficient and perfect in who He is, **humbled himself** in Christ Jesus so that we can be reconciled to Him."

Additional Resource

"The King of Heaven," from a presentation/bible study by Alistair Begg (YouTube)