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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Daniel 4.

(2014)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises
But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Daniel 4.

Topics.

- Nebuchadnezzar speaks to all the people of the earth.
- The Spirit of the Holy God is in Daniel.
- Nebuchadnezzar's second vision (a tree in the midst of the earth).
- A Holy one comes from heaven and says chop down the tree.
- The Most High rules the kingdom of men.
- The stump of the tree is left in the earth.
- Nebuchadnezzar asks Daniel to interpret the dream.
- Daniel interprets the vision of the tree.
- Daniel interprets the vision of the stump.
- Nebuchadnezzar loses his mind and regains his mind.

NOTE: for information of people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Nebuchadnezzar Speaks to all the People of the Earth.

Daniel 4:1-2 ----- ¹King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! ²It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. ³How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon glorifies the Most High God, the God of Israel. The king believed in many other gods, but considered the LORD God the Most High God of all the gods (See verse 8).

How great his signs are: refers to Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar dream in chapter one and the fantastic deliverance from the fiery furnace of Daniel's three friends in chapter two.

Inheritance: the people of the Old Testament saw their gods as working through their nations from one generation to the next generation. They believed even though one generation passed away and another rose in its place their gods continued to work through the new generation and eternally on into the future generations. The focus of the people of Israel in the Old Testament is very similar to this concept, they also appear more focused on God's blessings working from generation to generation than an eternal kingdom coming to earth nevertheless there are glimpses, echoes and insights that they had some understanding of God's ultimate eternal Kingdom to come.

This focus is easily understood since God promised Israel: if they obeyed His statutes He would make them and their children and their children's children the head of all nations and prosper everything they put their hand too.

Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream.

Daniel 4:4-7 ----- ⁴I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. ⁵I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me.

⁶So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. ⁷Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation.

When Nebuchadnezzar had his first dream (in chapter one) he demanded the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and the Chaldeans (wise men) tell him the dream or they would be killed, but this time he explains to the wise men the dream and then asks them to interpret it, but they can't, because of what has happened in the previous two chapters the wise men are probably afraid to give the king an interpretation to his dream that is simply created by their own creative imagination and clothed in spiritual language which in times past deceived the king and the people that they were actually receiving prophetic words and wisdom from their gods.

The Spirit of the Holy God is in Daniel.

Daniel 4:8-9 ----- ⁸At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream, saying, ⁹"O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar named Daniel Belteshazzar after his Babylonian god. Belteshazzar means, may Bel protect his life. Daniel's name ended in the syllable (*el*) for God, but Nebuchadnezzar changed his name to Belteshazzar to honour the gods of Babylon no doubt Nebuchadnezzar valued Daniel and probably believed that by giving him such a name it would entice the gods to protect Daniel.

God's of Babylon: (Bel and Baal) Babylon was the religious and cultural centre of the land Bel was the Baal and the supreme god of the Babylonians, he was believed to be the supreme ruler, the life-giver, controller of the elements, the god of justice and the one who holds society together. Each of the important deities had, in one or more of the Babylonian cities, a large temple in which he or she was worshipped as the divine civic ruler and protector. The larger cities also contained many temples and chapels dedicated to one deity or another; Babylon, for example, possessed more than fifty temples in Chaldean times (8th to 6th century B.C.).

Temple services were generally conducted in open courts containing fountains for ablution and altars for sacrifices. In the inner part of the temple, the statue of the deity stood on a pedestal in a special niche, it was the holy of holies, and only the high priest and other privileged members of the clergy and court were permitted to enter it. The clergy comprised of high priests, sacrifice priests, musicians, singers, magicians, soothsayers, diviners, dream interpreters, astrologers, female devotees, and hierodules (temple courtesans).

Sacrifices were offered daily, consisted of animal and vegetable foods, libations of water, wine, and beer, and the burning of incense. Numerous annual and monthly festivals were held, including a feast to celebrate the new moon. (See also Baal in Map Locations and People of the Bible (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Magic: originally the word magic meant the science of art of the Magi, the Persian priestly caste, who, like the Levites, were devoted to the practice of religion. With the wide extension of the term "magus," the word magic, too acquired broader significance. It came to mean all occult rituals or processes deigned to influence or control the course of nature, to dominate men or circumstances by the alliance, aid, or use of supernatural powers, and generally to tap and to employ the forces of an unseen world.

Divination: refers to the art of forecasting the future with a view to avoiding the perils and pitfalls. It might be included under the same classification as magic since its methods were frequently considered "magic."

Daniel came before Nebuchadnezzar after all his wise men had told him that they cannot interpret his second dream (vision).

Nebuchadnezzars Second Vision (a Tree in the Midst of the Earth).

Daniel 4:10-12 ----- ¹⁰The visions of my (Nebuchadnezzars) head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. ¹¹The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. ¹²Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

Nebuchadnezzar had a second dream and saw a tree that: -

- Was enormously high and growing in the middle of the earth.
- Became so strong the top of it reached heaven.
- Was beautiful and all the world was aware of it.
- Had abundant food and gave shelter to everyone.

A Holy One comes from Heavens and says Chop down the Tree.

Daniel 4:13-14 ----- ¹³I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. ¹⁴He proclaimed aloud and said thus: 'Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches.

Visions: can relate to a spectacle gazed at by the eyes or a movie played out in the mind. In most cases God gives the picture or vision then the prophet speaks or writes it in their own words. Sometimes the same biblical event or experience is spoken of as an actual and real event, while at other times the same event maybe recorded as a vision (an image or mental experience within the mind).

A biblical vision is always under God's control and can appear as a movie played out on the screen of the imagination of the mind (similar to a dream) or it may appear as a hologram appearing in the air that is actually seen by the eyes of the prophet or to whoever God chooses to give the vision to. The vision communicates the LORD'S will or future events to the prophet who then proceeds to tell the vision to the people, sometimes in their own words and at other times in the exact words the LORD has spoken to them in the vision.

Nebuchadnezzar in his vision sees: a holy one chop down the tree and strip it bare so that it was made useless to everyone.

The Stump of the Tree is Left in the Earth.

Daniel 4:15-16 ----- ¹⁵But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. ¹⁶Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him.

NOTICE: the language changes the stump is personified and spoken of as having a mind of a man, but will become that of a wild animal. This means the man (the stump) will go from being mentally healthy, balanced and able to make wise and rational decisions based on sensible, reasonable and rational thinking to having a mind that is disordered, incompetent and totally incapable of having any reasonable thought, foresight or wisdom (i.e. from sanity to insanity).

The Most High rules the Kingdom of Men.

Daniel 4:17 ----- ¹⁷The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.'

The entire reason for the man in Nebuchadnezzar vision going from sanity to insanity, from wisdom to foolishness is so that the world will know that God rules

over kings and kingdoms and exalts and humbles who He will. Notice if it brings about God's purpose on earth He will even exalt a most foolish man over a kingdom or nation.

What we can learn today: not only should those who belong to God trust that God is working in their lives, but also be fully confident that He is in control of the nations and that His eternal will is being worked out through them whether the nation's leader is wise or foolish.

Nebuchadnezzar asks Daniel to interpret the Dream.

Daniel 4:18-19 ----- ¹⁸This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar (Daniel), tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you." ¹⁹Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, "Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies!"

Daniel has already interpreted one dream for Nebuchadnezzar that no-one else was able to, so the king knows Daniel has the power to interpret his second vision, but before Daniel tells the king what the vision means he sees what God is about to do and is horrified. Nebuchadnezzar must have seen Daniel's horror and comforts him by telling him not to be alarmed. Daniel totally shocked hopes the vision is for the king's enemies and not the king himself.

Daniel interprets the Vision of the Tree.

Daniel 4:20-22 ----- ²⁰The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, ²¹whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived— ²²it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth.

The Tree: is a symbol of King Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom.

Daniel interprets the Vision of the Stump.

Daniel 4:23-26 ----- ²³And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,' ²⁴this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, ²⁵that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. ²⁶And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules.

The interpretation of the Stump: God is going to humble king Nebuchadnezzar, he will lose his mind, live with animals, eat grass and sleep outside. This is probably colourful poetic language to depict the total insanity of Nebuchadnezzar's mind is about to undergo.

Seven periods of time shall pass: means Nebuchadnezzar will be humbled for a long period of time before he comes to the realisation that it is the LORD God who rules the kingdoms of this earth and gives the nations to whoever he will.

Seven: (Hebrew shib`ah) (sheba`) from Strong's Concordance is a primitive cardinal number; seven (as the sacred full one) also seven times, by implication a week and by extension an indefinite number (i.e. sevenfold).

Times: (Hebrew `iddan) from Strong's Concordance means a set time; technical a year, because of this some interpret the expression, "until seven times pass over Nebuchadnezzar," to be seven weeks, while others interpret it to mean seven years (Daniel 4:23).

Leave the stump of the roots of the tree: means during the time of the king's insanity the kingdom will be kept for him.

Daniel warns Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 4:27 ----- ²⁷Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity."

Daniel warns Nebuchadnezzar to stop oppressing the poor and the less fortunate and turn from his iniquities (i.e. extreme pride and arrogance etc.) (See verse 30).

Nebuchadnezzar loses his Mind.

Daniel 4:28-33 ----- ²⁸All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰and the king answered and said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" ³¹While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, ³²and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." ³³Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

Twelve months after Daniel's warning (no doubt Daniel probably warned him many other times during that time) the king is boasting how he by his power established the glorious city and kingdom of Babylon, but God took away his sanity and everything Nebuchadnezzar saw in his vision came upon him.

Nebuchadnezzar regains his Mind.

Daniel 4:34-37 ----- ³⁴At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; ³⁵all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" ³⁶At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. ³⁷Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Nebuchadnezzar makes a great statement: -

- Whoever walks in pride God is able to humble.

At the end of the appointed period of time Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges: -

- His pride and his sanity returns to him.
- God is worthy of all praises and honour.
- God's works and His ways are right and just.
- God's Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom that endures from generation to generation.

- God does according to His will amongst all the inhabitants of the earth.
- No matter how powerful or mighty a person maybe in the world they are accounted as nothing to God (meaning they have no influence over Him).
- No-one in heaven or on earth can influence God or is powerful enough to change His plans or purposes.
- No-one can question what God has done.

End.