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| **Daniel Chapter 4** | |
| Based on the American Standard Version of 1901 | ***Concise PRESENTATION NOTES***  **by Charles Dailey**  (Black underlined words match words in the Bible text.) |
|  | **There is little in history, secular or sacred, to corroborate this chapter. Paul Butler devotes several pages to possibilities. This event does not conflict with other reports, it is simply not reported by others.   "The form of this, as well as of the rest of the chapter, indicates that here is a Babylonian state paper, incorporated by Daniel into Holy Scripture." (from The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1962 by Moody Press)   The state letter was circulated in the Babylonian Empire long before Daniel included it in his document.   This report was written by Neb after he was disciplined by heaven.** |
| **1) Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all the peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied unto you.** | **– There is nothing pompous here. Neb writes in a straight-forward manner with a formal opening.  - He included peace in his greeting** |
| **2) It hath seemed good unto me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God hath wrought toward me.** | **– The great polytheist now writes like a monotheist. The chapter reveals the events that has brought him to a humble position before God.  - Neb admires God's dealings with him.** |
| **3) How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.** | **– Neb knows now that it is God's kingdom that is everlasting and not his own.  - Neb had learned that the kingdoms of men were transient, but the kingdom of God was permanent and not subject to changes in dynasties.** |
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| **4) I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace.** | **– Butler says here: "The mighty king was at rest which indicates more precisely that he was feeling secure and completely free from apprehension. His wars were over; his kingdom was tranquil and prosperous beyond his fondest dreams. He had built a magnificent city; gathered about him the wealth and the luxuries of the world and now he was preparing ‘to while away the remainder of his life enjoying it all.'"** |
| **5) I saw a dream which made me afraid; and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.** | **– Neb tells of his second fearsome dream.** |
| **6) Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.** |  |
| **7) Then came in the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers; and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.** | **– The king was still relying on the old advisors for the meaning of his dreams. They were still failing.** |
| **8) But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and I told the dream before him, saying,** | **– After trying the rest, he tried the best.  - Neb even used his Hebrew name Daniel, the name that bears the name of the God with whom he is coming to terms.  - but note that Neb was still a polytheist during the time that his formal letter was describing.** |
| **9) O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.** | **– Daniel must have been chief-of-staff of the advisors. This agrees with 2:48. Leupold thinks a better translation would be "chief of the scholars."  - Neb knew that gods could somehow dwell with men, at least with Daniel.** |
| **10) Thus were the visions of my head upon my bed: I saw, and, behold, a tree in the midst of the earth; and the height thereof was great.** | **– Neb had seen an impressively large tree. It was in the center of the earth, and so tall that it reached to heaven. - This tree could be seen from everywhere.** |
| **11) The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth.** |  |
| **12) The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was food for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the birds of the heavens dwelt in the branches thereof, and all flesh was fed from it.** | **– It was fruitful and healthy. It served the animals and the birds, in fact, everyone.  - Life on earth was grand as long as the tree was standing.** |
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| **13) I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven.** | **– The watcher is probably a term for angel. Neb had used the word angel once before, but this term watcher may describe what the angel was doing.** |
| **14) He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off its branches, shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from its branches.** |  |
| **15) Nevertheless leave the stump of its roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven: and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:** | **– The stump is to be saved and even banded because the root does have a future.  - The figure of the tree is dropped in favor of the direct meaning. Neb is to be turned out with the animals  - Neb is to bunk with the beasts and forage with the animals for a while.** |
| **16) let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.** | **– He is to have a beast's heart for seven times. It is most reasonable that seven years are meant.** |
| **17) The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the lowest of men.** | **– The punishment is meted out by the angels because of the arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar.  - The holy ones in heaven demanded the braggart's hide.  - The Message paraphrase says: "He arranges kingdom affairs however he wishes, and makes leaders out of losers."** |
| **18) This dream I, king Nebuchadnezzar, have seen; and thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation; but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.** | **– The regular dream diviners have flunked their test again and Neb wants the straight story from Belteshazzar (Daniel) who seems to have the spirit of the gods inside of him.** |
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| **19) Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was stricken dumb for a while, and his thoughts troubled him. The king answered and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine adversaries.** | **– Telling the most powerful man on the planet (and your employer) that he's going to be fired is not the most enticing work that a prophet could do. Daniel was troubled and unable to speak.  - Neb noted Daniel's personal upset over the dream.  - The Message Bible reads: "I wish this dream were about your enemies and its interpretation for your foes."  - Daniel did not say, "Haven't I been telling you . . . "** |
| **20) The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;** | **– Perhaps the blow was softened some as Daniel recited the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar in the dream picture.  - Daniel was a man who would not violate his conscience at the king's command; but neither would he be disloyal to the king when it was not a matter of conscience.** |
| **21) whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was food for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the birds of the heavens had their habitation:** |  |
| **22) it is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.** | **– The tree was Nebuchadnezzar. This figure of speech is used other places in Scripture. Ezekiel 31:3  - "Ancient Semites were fond of hyperbole and used it without its being misunderstood by anyone. Nebuchadnezzar's realm, in fact, was smaller geographically than either the Persian or the Greek or the Roman empire. It was, however, very large and included most of the well known parts of the world." (from The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1962 by Moody Press)** |
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| **23) And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew down the tree, and destroy it; nevertheless leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven: and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;** | **– The falling tree would make a crash. It would be damaged by the fall and its branches lopped off. Only the stump was to remain.   Paul Butler puts the dream in perspective when he writes:**  **The most important part of Daniel's revelation is the focus or purpose of the king's insanity. The intent of the matter is to give mankind, specifically this heathen king and his subjects, and the captive covenant people of God, a proof that the fortunes of kings and empires are in the hand of Jehovah - that His providence perpetually interposes in the affairs of men, distributing thrones and empires, always for the good of the faithful, but according to His will. "Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He pleased" Psalm 115:3; "The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all" Psalm 103:9** |
| **24) this is the interpretation, O king, and it is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king:** |  |
| **25) that thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen, and shalt be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee; till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.** |  |
| **26) And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.** |  |
| **27) Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if there may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.** | **– Nebuchadnezzar had an option. He could repent of his sins, put righteousness in his life and show mercy to the poor. This might let him continue with the good life he was presently enjoying.  - The predicted punishment may have been conditional if Neb had repented.  - This repentance included helping the poor, some of whom were Hebrews held in Babylon.** |
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| **28) All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.** |  |
| **29) At the end of twelve months he was walking in the royal palace of Babylon.** | **– The Lord allowed a year for Neb to repent and clean up his royal act.** |
| **30) The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling-place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?** | **– When he went on one of his bragging jags, heaven had heard enough and the axe fell. He may have been giving some visiting royalty a tour at the time.  - Babylon was a city long before Neb, but he did enhance it greatly. In that sense, he built it.** |
| **31) While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee:** | **– Neb's kingdom was taken from him. His social world was gone. Now it's grass instead of gourmet.** |
| **32) and thou shalt be driven from men; and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen; and seven times shall pass over thee; until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.** | **– Neb was a great hunter as can be seen from some of the art work of his empire. When he was sent to the fields, he did not join the lions to conquer other animals, but joined the lowly oxen to forage for his food.** |
| **33) The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair was grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.** | **– His body wet with dew may have indicated a lack of clothing.  - Neb's hair would grow long and there were no manicures.** |
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| **34) And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever; for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation.** | **– The seven years passed. - Neb's mind returned and he knew who was in charge of earth. Not him. He could look up to God and not down for grass.  - God is blessed, praised and honored. - God's power and dominion are acknowledged.** |
| **35) And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?** | **– Neb understands armies and he knows that God is commander-in-chief in heaven. - Neb knows that God is beyond questioning.** |
| **36) At the same time mine understanding returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent greatness was added unto me.** | **– It may be that Daniel and the other advisors kept the Empire somewhat together because he still had a kingdom after emerging from his grazing period.** |
| **37) Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven; for all his works are truth, and his ways justice; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.** | **– The Message Bible is informative here: And that's why I'm singing – I, Nebuchadnezzar – singing and praising the King of Heaven: "Everything he does is right, and he does it the right way. He knows how to turn a proud person into a humble man or woman."** |
| [**The Next Chapter**](http://www.ncbible.org/Resources/Danielcomm05.html) | |