

## **The King's Journey**

### **Daniel 4:28-37**

#### **Introduction**

It isn't always a good thing when dreams come true. In the second chapter the King dreams of a golden image. The that dream becomes a reality and all the world is invited to worship the king's golden image. In refusing to worship that image three children of Israel are thrown into a fiery furnace and preserved in that furnace by God. Now the King has another dream (chapter four).

The dream was a warning. His pride was a problem. And God would offer a humiliating solution to the King's persistent problem. And because God is gracious and kind; because God is supreme in the universe; sovereign in His power over us and because He has a simple plan for us; He can and will deal with our rebellion.

D.L. Moody was fond of reminding people that God sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves. Nebuchadnezzar was full of himself. The Lord in His wisdom and goodness allowed Nebuchadnezzar to lose his mind. Someone said it is our self-importance, not our misery that gets in God's way.

#### **The King's Pride (vv.28-30)**

*Daniel 4:28–30 (NKJV) 28All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.*

*29At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon.*

*30The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"*

The King sums up the chapter to this point (v.28). The King received a dream (vv.4-18). The King of Heaven revealed the dream (vv.19-27). Daniel begged the King of Babylon to heed the warning; break off his sins; embrace righteousness; prove his sincerity by showing mercy to the poor (v.27). The Lord had given Nebuchadnezzar space to repent (v.29). Grace precedes judgment. We are reminded of Peter's warnings for those who misinterpret God's gracious postponing of judgment; *2 Peter 3:9*; "*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*"

The King would not listen. He ignored the warnings. The King admits; "Everything that God said would happen, happened!" (v.28) The Bible tells us that God is not a man that he should lie" (Numbers 23:19).

Ron Rhodes: "*God desired repentance, not suffering, for Nebuchadnezzar. But Nebuchadnezzar would not bend*" ( *40 Days Through Daniel*; p.118).

## The King's Journey

### Daniel 4:28-37

What a powerful thought. Nebuchadnezzar would not bend. **When God's presence is welcome there is no room for pride. The presence of God makes us aware of our true self.**

The Bible is a tale of two cities; Jerusalem and Babylon (v.29). Remember Babylon was founded by Nimrod shortly after Noah's flood (Genesis 10:8-10; 11:1-9). It was home to rebellion and the origin of organized apostate religion. The king was in one of his royal palaces; there were three—with one in the opulent Hanging Gardens; one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Pride is subtle and sinister. We imagine we are something apart from God. Pride distorts our view of God and ourselves and others (v.30). Pride lures us into living independently of God.

The king speaks (v.30). The Aramaic phrase translated “. . .*that I have built*” is more literally translated “. . .*which I myself have built*”.

This king was well known for his building projects. He built a 400 foot terraced mound filled with lush tropical gardens, fruit trees and water!

The city was undeniably beautiful. Even in the ruins of the Ishtar Gate and the treasure trove of archeological wonders; we see the remnants of a vast and sophisticated city. The Ishtar Gate is in part preserved at the British Museum of History in London with its bright blue glazed tile and molded reliefs of lions and bulls and dragons. From the breathtaking view of the magnificent city Nebuchadnezzar's heart began to swell with pride—and crossed a line—somewhere between God's patient mercy and absolute hatred for sin—God decreed judgment. Where is the line located between God's mercy and God's wrath?

We have many words for pride. We sometimes substitute words like conceit or arrogance or vanity.

Why does God hate pride? Because it has the ability to cut us from God and others.

In part because it was through the portal of pride that sin entered the universe (see Isaiah 14:4-14). The Bible repeatedly says that God hates pride (Proverbs 6; 1Corinthians 4:6-7; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Timothy 6:4-10;17; James 4:13-17).

The Psalmist wrote (10:11) “*He has said in his heart, “God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see.”* The Living Bible puts it; “God isn't watching,” they say to themselves; “he'll never know!”

The proud heart convinces itself if there is a God He isn't watching or He doesn't care or He isn't good. Or—that His goodness will smother His justice and cause us to escape judgment.

At the heart of pride is the boast that we can live apart from God; independent of God.

## **The King's Journey**

### **Daniel 4:28-37**

Richard Newton wrote; "Let me give you the history of pride in three small chapters. The beginning of pride was in heaven. The continuance of pride is on earth. The end of pride is in hell. This history shows how unprofitable it is."

The Bible makes it clear that God is the giver of all good gifts (James 1:17). In 1 Corinthians 4:7 Paul warns the immature Corinthian believers; "*What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?*"

What exactly do you have that was not given to you? "Nobody ever gave me anything." Really? Who gave you life? Who gave you health? Who gave you the ability to do what you do?

Groucho Marx was fond of saying; "I started out with nothing and I still have most of it left."

Pride is dangerous because it undermines our faith and then severs our connection with the Lord and others. The Bible warns those with a wicked heart of unbelief (Hebrews 3:12).

Someone once described pride like a beard. It just keeps growing. The solution? Shave it every day.

### **The King's Humiliation (vv.31-33)**

*31 While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!"*

Before the words could even leave the King's lips judgment fell. There are two voices in this passage. The voice of pride speaking from the King's heart; and the voice of judgment speaking from the heart of the King of Heaven.

The source of the judgment; the Most High God.

The message of judgment; your kingdom has departed from you.

The object of the King's pride, the thing he thought reflected his glory and majesty disappears.

*32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."*

*33 That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.*

What did God's judgment include?

The King lost his realm (v.31).

The King lost his relationships (v.32).

## **The King's Journey**

### **Daniel 4:28-37**

“. . .they shall drive you from men.”

The King lost his reason “they shall make you eat grass like oxen” (v.33).

How terrifying. The Bible does not offer a psychiatric diagnosis. The specific symptoms include isolation; eating grass (grazing in the grass is a gas baby can you dig it). We deserved God's judgment. Instead so many of us became objects of his love and mercy. Rebellion is a part of our nature. “For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are” Moses told them. “If even today, while I am still here with you, you are defiant rebels against the Lord, how much more rebellious will you be after my death!” (Deuteronomy 31:27).

John Henry Newman wrote; “Reason can ascertain the profound difficulties of our condition; it cannot remove them.”

The King lost resources and reputation.

Judgment fell on Adam and Eve for their disobedience to God (Genesis 3). Judgment fell on the Jews for rejecting Christ (Matthew 21:42-44). Judgment fell on Ananias and Sapphires for lying to God (Acts 5). Judgment fell on Herod for his self-exalting pride (Acts 12:21-23).

Can anything good come from our humiliation?

It depends. If we are willing to abandon our rebellion against God and embrace repentance and experience reconciliation and restoration.

Humiliation can help us to overcome pride. In the ancient world the Jews took great pride in their buildings and temple. In Ezekiel 7:24 the Lord says; “Therefore I will bring the worst of the Gentiles, And they will possess their houses; I will cause the pomp of the strong to cease, And their holy places shall be defiled.” What does that mean? God was willing to crush their pride by bringing to Jerusalem the worst of the Gentiles (the Babylonians); break down their defenses (they were very proud of their defenses) and destroy the Temple.

Humiliation can serve as an opportunity to repent. When the prodigal son found himself far from home hungry—slopping pigs—he was so hungry that he envied the pigs their food (see Luke 15:16). Can suffering, dishonor or shame serve as sufficient motivators to swallow our pride and cry out to God?

### **The King's Restoration (vv.34-37)**

*34And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding 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 is from generation to generation.*

## The King's Journey

### Daniel 4:28-37

The time of desperation, loss and humiliation was about to close. In this verse the King describes his conversion. And what was the first step? "I, Nebuchadnezzar; lifted my eyes to heaven". O King why did it take so long? God's grace allows us to look up (John 6:44;65). "For those who honor Me I will honor" (1 Samuel 2:30). Jeremiah 23:23-24; "*Am I a God near at hand,*" says the LORD (Jehovah) "*And not a God afar off? (24) Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?*" says the Lord; *Do I not fill heaven and earth? Says the Lord (Jehovah).*

Restoration begins when we look up! Corrie Ten Boom: "*If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God you'll be at rest.*"

And what followed? A restoration to sanity. Praise and blessing to the Lord. The King calls on the Lord Most High. The King's understanding returns. This results in praise and honor to the Most High God. This is El Elyon (v.34)—supreme in His position (Rank); Sovereign in His power over us (rule); this God has a simple plan; acknowledge His sovereignty. admit our sin; accept His salvation! El Elyon is mentioned in Genesis 14 (vv.18-20); by Melchizedek—the mysterious Gentile king who is a priest and the king of Jebus (Jerusalem). He brings bread and wine and is called the priest of God Most High (El Elyon). He pronounced blessing on Abram and said; "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." This is the first revelation of that most Sacred Name. Abram was most impressed. He gave a tithe or offering to this mysterious figure. The most High divided the nations to the Gentiles when He separated the Sons of Adam (Deuteronomy 32:8). As the possessor of Heaven and Earth He is sovereign in both places.

*35All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"*

We might be left with the impression that since the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing that they are in fact nothing. Nothing could be further from the truth! The Bible says that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son (John 3:16). God punishes sin, but God offers mercy to the sinful! God's justice is not changed by His mercy!

What does it mean that no one can restrain or hold back the hand of God? Once God purposes to do something it will be done. In Isaiah 14:27 we read; "*The Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?*" Job asks, "*Who can turn Him back?*" (Job 9:12). Proverbs 21:30—makes plain—"No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against the Lord." **We have complete assurance that God will do all that He has planned and promised to do.**

## **The King's Journey**

### **Daniel 4:28-37**

*36At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me.*

The Lord sovereignly healed the King. The Lord restored the King's sanity and the King's kingdom and resources and reputation.

The Bible is clear that God is in the restoration business. Pastor Chuck Smith loved to restore old cars.

The Lord can restore people physically, and financially and spiritually. God can restore after we have experienced great trials. "He restores my soul" (Psalm 23:1-3). "After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you" (1 Peter 5:10).

Tell me something? Are you in need of restoration? Admit your sin. Repent. Turn to the Lord immediately! Don't delay. Do it now.

*37Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.*

*"...His ways just".* Every thing God does is wise and just. **This would include God's judgment on the King.**

*"...And those who walk in pride He is able to put down."* Nebuchadnezzar admits all who walk in pride God is able to humble. He learned this lesson the hard way.

Was Nebuchadnezzar saved?  
Has he really changed?

Several Bible teachers have pointed out that in this chapter we have a preview of what will happen to the nations in the last days. The nations will boast of their greatness and glory. And God will bring seven years of terrible judgment upon them and bring them low. At the end of the Tribulation period the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the earth and establish His Kingdom. The nations that have trusted Christ will enter that Kingdom; the others will be cast out. The nations that have been converted and delivered from pride and unbelief will enjoy the blessings of God (see *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament; p.565*).

## **Conclusion**

## **The King's Journey**

### **Daniel 4:28-37**

What have we learned? We should not neglect the warnings of God. Pride is a problem. God gives us space to repentant. But we should not deceive ourselves into thinking that grace and patience will postpone judgment forever.

The King wants us to learn from his reckless self-exaltation (vv.31-33).

How can we be certain that God will judge the human race? In Deuteronomy 7:1-26 the Lord warned His people to utterly destroy the enemies who lived in the land. "When the Lord your God delivers them over to you to be destroyed, do a complete job of it—don't make any treaties or show them mercy; utterly wipe them out" (7:2 TLB).

There are thousands of people who reject God and the Bible because of this verse. They see God as uncaring or unkind or even cruel. What kind of a God would order the extermination of a whole group of people? God called Israel to occupy the Land. God knew the inhabitants in the land were ripe for judgment. You are called to occupy Christ. There are things in our lives we are unwilling to think we are unable to forsake. We are called to utterly forsake sin. We are to put pride and all her sinister sisters to the sword of the Spirit.

The Lord's judgment on sin is inevitable, unavoidable and according to His own timing. God's judgment is always fair and just. God's judgment will be universal. All culture's and societies have some form of moral law. All culture's know murder is wrong. All culture's know abusing children is wrong. We are stubborn race. We know what's right and still decide to do what's wrong. Admit to yourself and to God that you fall short and fail to live up to your own standards of decency let alone the standards established by God.

We must first look in before we look up. But having cast our gaze to heaven we can know that God desires to forgive our sin and bring healing to our lives.