

The Book of Daniel Part 8

Daniel 4:1 - 4:37

by Erik Olsen

I. INTRO:

- in the twilight of Israel's recorded history, events surrounding Nebuchadnezzar's life foreshadow dimensions of God's plan of redemption hitherto unknown
- deeper reason for Israel's fall – Romans 11
- Nebuchadnezzar's dream outlining historical framework of remainder of history
- final appearance of the Angel of the Lord in the Bible / picture of Christ in the furnace ... foreshadows
- possibly the most detailed account of a Gentile's salvation in the Old Testament – that of Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful person in the world during his reign

II. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S TRANSFORMATION

--"4:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, **To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:** Peace be multiplied to you. 2 **I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.** 3 How great are His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion is from generation to generation. ... 8 But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, **according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God**), and I told the dream before him, saying: 9 "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation. 10 These were the visions of my head while on my bed... [Nebuchadnezzar explains second dream]... 18 ... Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since 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 God is in you.**"

- Neb. speaks of the Lord with a prideful attitude – "I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me." (v.2)
- Neb. uses a personal pronoun to address Baal - "according to the name of my god" (v.8)
 - meaning of name Nebuchadnezzar gave to Daniel:
 - "Bel" = Aramaic form of Baal
 - "Belteshazzar" means Prince of Baal, or one favored by Baal
- attitude similar to that of cultural Christians...
 - God is compartmentalized and only called upon when needed, like an insurance policy (in Neb's case he looks to the Lord for interpretation of dreams)
 - unlike his personal reference to Baal, Neb. speaks of the Lord in impersonal terms:
 - doesn't use personal pronoun in relation to the Lord
 - but refers to him as "their [the Israelites] own God" (3:28)
 - doesn't address the Lord directly, but only indirectly through Daniel
 - "Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation... you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you." (v.18)
- Daniel gives interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's second dream
 - irony: Neb. kept to himself the dream that concerned the world (ch. 2), and he proclaimed to the world the dream that concerned only himself

--"28 ... At the end of twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. The 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**? 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!** 32 [prophecy quoted] 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." **And 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. 35 All 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?" 36 At 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. 37 **Now 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.**"

--Neb's pride: "this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty" (31)

--Neb. didn't realize that his power was subject to the sovereign Lord and could not continue indefinitely...

--humanistic view of the future... many possible roads, unlimited potential...

--God has already locked in place the future of world history...

--Acts 17:26-28 "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has **determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings**, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being..."

--70 Weeks Prophecy (Daniel 9)

--not only the future of the world but your personal future

--the fanciful dreams of mankind for generations beyond ours may leave us longing, but the glorious future that God has planned is within reach of everyone because it is outside of time altogether...

--2 Cor. 4:16-18: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

--1 Cor. 15:50-54: "Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption**. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

--The mindset of the world has it backwards... tries to prevent death as long as possible and hopes to one day live forever without dying – but our bodies must die before we can receive perfect, immortal bodies that God has prepared for us!

--Psalm 46:10-11: "**Be still, and know that I am God**; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! 11 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

--as we grow our mind spends less time racing ahead... and finds a heavenly peace waiting on God in the present...

--Phil. 4:6-7: "**Be anxious for nothing**, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

--James 4:13-16: "Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; 14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that

appears for a little time and then vanishes away. 15 Instead you ought to say, "**If the Lord wills**, we shall live and do this or that." 16 But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. "

--80% of what we worry about never happens...

--freed from the limitations of our own thinking...and reduced stress opens the way for inspirational thoughts...

--unlimited potential with the Lord's strength...

--our weakness + His strength is infinitely better than our strength without His strength

--2 Chron. 16:7-10: "Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. 8 Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. 9 **For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.** In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars."

--Neb's sanity returned to him when he came to understand that God is not just another one of many gods that can be appeased by lip service, but He is the sovereign Lord of lords and King of kings - "that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses." (v. 32)

--conversion of Nebuchadnezzar suggested by:

--before humiliation, Neb. exhibited a kind of pseudo-belief – belief without good works (lip service)

--Dan. 3:28-29 "Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

--James 2:18-20 "But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. **Even the demons believe — and tremble!** 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"

--Daniel's conditional statement about Neb's restoration suggests that Neb. possessed genuine faith that is accompanied by good works

--"Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; **break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.** Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity." (v.27)

--Greek active verb tense of "**praise and extol and honor the King of heaven**" coupled with personal pronoun "I..." (v.37) which he used for the first time in reference to God after his humiliation

--the Bible describes true belief that is accompanied by good works in various ways:

-belief with "**all your heart**" (Acts 8:37)

-"**genuine faith**" (2 Timothy 1:5)

-"**trust**" (Eph. 1:13)

--living without the fear of God is a form of insanity

--Proverbs 9:10: "**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom**, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

--live in expectation of Jesus Christ's return and our future with Him rather than the vain hope of mankind...

--gaze at the stars and picture Christ in the distance, approaching the earth... He could return at any time... What will you be doing when He returns?