

DANIEL – The Key to Revelation

Week 4 – “Nebuchadnezzar’s Testimony & The Fall of Babylon”

10/11/26 – PM

TEXT: Daniel 4 & 5

Chapter 4 is the personal testimony of Nebuchadnezzar in his own words. It contains a second dream experienced by this king, and includes his account of his conversion. There is a progressive understanding of the true God in the story of Nebuchadnezzar. First, he recognized Him as “God of gods’ (Daniel 2:47), then as “the God of Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego” (Daniel 3:28), and finally as “the King of heaven” (Daniel 4:37). Chapter 4 was not written by Daniel, but is in fact an official Babylonian document written by the king himself.

I. The Second Dream of Nebuchadnezzar

- a. About 40 years since the dream of the great image
- b. It is prophetic
- c. It troubles the king greatly
- d. Unlike the first dream, he clearly remembers this one
- e. As with the first dream, his wise men and magicians cannot interpret
- f. As with the first dream, Daniel is called in and gives the interpretation

II. His Conversion Story

- a. He is telling this story about 1 year before his death in 561 B.C.
- b. The decree is published to the whole world (4:1)
- c. It is the story of him coming to personal faith in the true God (4:2-3)

III. Nebuchadnezzar’s Testimony

- a. His proclamation (4:1-3)
- b. His dream (4:4-18)
 - i. A great tree encompassing the earth, strong and powerful.
Beneficial to all the inhabitants of the earth

- ii. An angel (“watcher”) is sent down from heaven and orders the tree to be cut down, and its heart to be changed to that of a beast for 7 years (times) – vs. 13-17
- c. Daniel’s interpretation (4:19-27)
 - i. The tree is Nebuchadnezzar himself (vs. 20-22)
 - ii. Nebuchadnezzar would be “cut down to size” (vs. 23)
 - iii. He would become like a beast of the field for seven years
 - iv. Daniel pleaded with the king concerning his sin (vs. 27)
- d. The fulfillment of the dream
 - i. God’s word is certain, happening exactly as He said it would
 - ii. God gave the king a full year to repent (vs. 29)
 - iii. Nebuchadnezzar’s pride (vs. 30)
 - iv. His judgment (vs. 31-33)
 - 1. Sudden – “while the word was in the king’s mouth”
 - 2. Sure – just as Daniel prophesied
 - 3. Severe - (vs. 33)
- e. The King’s conversion (4:34-36)
 - i. Like any lost man, he had to recognize where he was (lost), before he could be redeemed. – “I lifted up mine eyes unto heaven” (vs. 34)

CHAPTER 5 – “The Fall of Babylon”

*Notes – The events of Daniel chapter 7 and 8, take place between the events of chapter 4 and 5.

The founder of Babylon was Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah, over 2000 years before Christ. He was the grandson of Ham. When Nebuchadnezzar became King of Babylon, he rebuilt and beautified the city to the most magnificent the world had ever seen.

The city was built in an exact square of 15 miles on a side, or 60 miles around. It was surrounded by a brick wall 87 feet thick, which according to Herodotus, was

350 feet high. On the walls were 250 towers, and the top of the wall was wide enough to permit six chariots to drive abreast. Outside this wall was a vast moat surrounding the city, kept filled with water from the Euphrates River, and crossed by draw-bridges in front of the gates. Inside the city was the “Hanging Gardens of Babylon”, one of the seven wonders of the world, built by Nebuchadnezzar to please his wife and ease her homesickness. Over 1 million people resided in Babylon.

After Nebuchadnezzar’s death, several men ruled Babylon for short periods, finally led by Nabonidus, his son-in-law. While on a military crusade, Nabonidus makes his son, Belshazzar, his co-regent and leaves him in charge of the city. His short rule marks the transition from the “head of gold” in Nebuchadnezzar’s image, to the arms and chest of silver (Medes and the Persians).

Chapter 5 takes place in 538 B.C., 23 years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar.

I. The Feast (5:1-4)

- a. Babylon was besieged by the Persians for three months, and this feast of Belshazzar was a contemptuous, prideful event meant to demonstrate his confidence that Babylon would prevail. By this time, the kingdom of Babylon had effectively collapsed, and only the city of Babylon remained. It was a feast of drunkenness and idolatrous worship. In his foolishness (and drunkenness – vs. 2) he calls for the vessels taken from the Temple at Jerusalem 68 years before. It was a fatal mistake.

II. The Finger of God (vs. 5-9)

III. His Fear (vs. 6, 9)

- a. The wise men could not read it or understand it (vs. 8)

IV. His Family (vs. 10)

- a. Her position – not his wife, most likely his mother (daughter of Nebuchadnezzar)

- b. Her proclamation – (vs. 11-12)

V. The Findings of Daniel (vs. 13-28)

- a. Daniel's preaching (vs. 18-23)
 - i. Straight to the point, plainly explained, and very personal. He had no respect for this king, as he did for Nebuchadnezzar
 - ii. The king had sinned willingly ("though thou knewest all this")
 - iii. He had lifted up himself against the Lord of Heaven (vs. 23)
 - iv. He had not glorified the one who held his breath in his hand
- b. Daniel's prophecy (vs. 24-28)
 - i. The Aramaic words "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" literally mean "Numbered, Numbered, Weighed, Divisions"
 - 1. "Peres" in vs. 28 replaces "Upharsin" in vs. 25. It is the singular form of "pharsin". "U" simply means "and"
- c. Daniel's promotion
 - i. As stated in an earlier lesson, Belshazzar makes him "third" ruler in the kingdom, because he himself was already "second" to Nabonidus, the co-regent. Daniel was approximately 85 years old at this time.

VI. The Fulfillment (vs. 30-31)

- a. History records the fall of Babylon occurred on October 13, 539 B.C.
- b. The attacking Persian troops were divided into three companies, with one-third stationed where the Euphrates River entered the city. The Persian army had diverted the river from its normal channel, allowing the army to enter the city "under" the gates by wading through the now-shallow river. The unguarded city was quickly surprised and overcome, fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel, as well as Jeremiah 50, and Isaiah 13. Belshazzar was killed within a few hours of Daniel's prophecy

Study references and commentaries used in this lesson:

“The Book of Daniel” – Rev. Clarence Larkin, 1929, published by the Clarence Larkin Estate, Glenside, PA 19038

“Daniel the Prophet” – Robert J. Sargent, 1987, published by Bible Baptist Church Publications, Oak Harbor, WA 98277