



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Justice Delayed But Not Denied (Daniel 4)

MARCH 30, 2011

Dave DePue / (785) 249 7604 / www.capitolcom.org / dave.depue@capitolcom.org

Friendly Notice: We will continue our Wednesday morning and noon Bible studies (and distribute these notes) on each Wednesday that the Legislature is in session. Interim studies are dependent on related ministry activities and travel around Kansas. Thank you for your participation and your service to the people of this Great State!

INTRODUCTION

God was (again) using the king of a secular nation to judge His people Israel. The events reported by Daniel were foretold by prophets Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Isaiah and Zephaniah. King Nebuchadnezzar seemed to be an effective but arrogant servant. This king does not do well in taking instructions or communication from God. Furthermore, King Nebuchadnezzar gets “puffed up” with all of his apparent accomplishments. Faithful reader, how do you feel when a subordinate boasts of a “win” in which they played a minor role in achieving?

THE SOVEREIGN SENDS A STERN SIGNAL

Daniel 4:10-12 “These were the visions of my head while on my bed: I was looking, and behold, A tree in the midst of the earth, And its height was great. The tree grew and became strong; Its height reached to the heavens, And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth. Its leaves were lovely, Its fruit abundant, And in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, And all flesh was fed from it. I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. He cried aloud and said thus: Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, And the birds from its branches. Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, Bound with a band of iron and bronze, In the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven,

And let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from that of a man, Let him be given the heart of a beast, And let seven times pass over him. This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.”¹

King Nebuchadnezzar had another dream. He reports that this occurred while he was “**at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace...**” (Daniel 4:4). The dream made him fearful and alarmed him. The king brought in all of his magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans, and diviners. He shared the contents of the dream but they were still not able to make an interpretation (Daniel 4:7). Finally Daniel came. Note the personal relationship that Daniel has developed with the king over the past thirty years. The King compliments Daniel: “**I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me**” (Daniel 4:7).

GUILTY, AWAITING SENTENCING

Daniel 4:19- Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.” Belteshazzar answered, “My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries!”²

The purpose of the dream and subsequent reality was to show the king that God presides over civil government and gives office to whomever He desires (Daniel 4:17, 25, 32). The purpose of this account in Scripture is to remind civil government office holders that God can humble the proud.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEADERS/LEGISLATORS: WEDNESDAYS 7-7:50 AM, CAPITOL ROOM 142 SOUTH

STAFF & GUESTS: WEDNESDAY S 12:05 – 12:55 PM, CAPITOL ROOM 142 SOUTH

Capitol Commission Kansas

Justice Delayed But Not Denied (Daniel 4)

Dave DePue / (785) 249 7604 / www.capitolcom.org / dave.depue@capitolcom.org

INTERPRETATION OUTLINE

1. The tall tree represents King Nebuchadnezzar. His dominion extended over much of the known world. The God of Heaven caused the land to be fruitful.
2. An angel (one of God's administration) announces that the tree is to be cut down and dispersed but the stump should remain. The kingdom will be reduced in size and the king removed (but left living). See Genesis 18, Isaiah 37:21-38, and Revelation 16.
3. A band of iron and bronze will be put around the stump. This band is to protect it from splitting due to rain and sun. The plan is for the stump to sprout anew. (Job 14:7-9). God will put a "fence" around the kingdom and may give the king a second term in office!
4. The king will have the mind of a beast and act like an animal. He will live in the wild and eat grass for seven years. This form of the disease called lycanthropy causes a person to think he is an animal.³ God will completely humble this king and let him get a clear perspective of life without the hand of God on him.
5. The Most High/the Sovereign God commanded that the stump with its roots be left intact. The kingdom will be given back to Nebuchadnezzar after he recognizes that God is his provider, God rules even over leaders!

ADVICE TO THE ONE SENTENCED

*Daniel 4:27 Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.*⁴

Daniel reached out to and gave his supervisor advice on how to seek grace from a Holy God. He prescribed recognition of sin and repentance (Isaiah 55:7).

SENTENCE CARRIED OUT

Daniel 4:30-32a Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" Even as the words were on his lips, a voice came from heaven,

"This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live as an animal;

The king took pride in his palace and surrounding city. The top of the protective walls could support two chariots passing and the hanging gardens were listed as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. He was judged for this pride and arrogance.

THE HUMBLER LEADER IS RESTORED

*Daniel 4:34-37 At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?" At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.*⁵

This king's conclusion is a short-cut to wisdom and a fast track to success (Proverbs 9:10-11). Do I need to lose a job, an election or an opportunity before God gets my attention?

¹ The Holy Bible. New King James Version. (Thomas Nelson). 1982.

² The Holy Bible. New International Version. (Biblica). 2007.

³ John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible. (Thomas Nelson Inc.). p1207.

⁴ The Holy Bible. New International Version. (Biblica). 2007.

⁵ Ibid