

A Study of the Book of Daniel

"The Testimony of a King"

Chapter 4

Review:

So far in our prior studies, we have looked at the first three chapters of the Book of Daniel. We have learned that the Book of Daniel contains two basic sections:

1. *Stories of individuals as they came face to face with life and death decisions. These stories **give us models for living at the end of time.***
2. ***Prophecy accurately predicting the rise and fall of the great empires** from Daniel's time to the end of time.*

In Daniel 1, we learned how Nebuchadnezzar attacked God's sanctuary. He also took God's people captive along with the consecrated vessels of the temple. He placed these sacred vessels of worship in the pagan temple of his God. In doing this, he mixed the vessels of God's worship with pagan worship. In this regard he is a type or example of the Antichrist power.

In Daniel 2, we learned how Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a great metal man followed by a rock that struck the image and destroyed it. The image grew into a mountain that filled the whole earth. God showed Nebuchadnezzar an outline of history of the great empires which will impact God's people from Daniel's time all the way down to the end of time. During this study, we also noticed several scriptures that reveal Jesus to be the rock. We identified the mountain as God's sanctuary.

In Daniel 3, we saw that Nebuchadnezzar rejected God's prophecy, and with it, the historical view of prophecy. Nebuchadnezzar established both false and forced worship. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to the image, but the fiery furnace punishment did not hurt them. Nebuchadnezzar saw the son of God walking in the midst of the fire with the three Hebrews. We learned that God honored their faithfulness by allowing them to stand in the presence of his eternal and fiery glory without being destroyed. Nebuchadnezzar was not killed when he approached the fiery door because he was being drawn to God.

In Daniel chapter 4, Daniel has been in captivity for about 35 years, and is over fifty years old. He and his friends Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego have been witnesses of the true God to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. In Chapter 2, God was revealed as the **only one who really knows the future**. The third chapter reveals God as the true **DELIVERER**. He is the mighty savior of his people. And in the fourth chapter of Daniel, God is revealed as the true **CONQUEROR**. He is the only true king of all the nations on earth. For 35 years God demonstrated His mercy toward Nebuchadnezzar. He created opportunities for the king to know and accept Him as the true God. In Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar tells his testimony and conversion story, recording the miracle of God's transforming grace and power in a heathen King's life.

Daniel 4:1-3 (Compare with Gal. 1:3-5)

"Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. 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."

Nebuchadnezzar personally addresses the reader by acknowledging the goodness and power of the true God. What a change from the Nebuchadnezzar of chapters 2 and 3 who had rejected God's historical outline of prophecy by creating the golden image in the plain of Dura.

Nebuchadnezzar starts out with words of “Peace.” How similar to the phrases in the openings of many of the writings of Paul (Gal. 1:3, Eph. 1:2, Phil 1:2, Rom. 5:1, etc.). Both Nebuchadnezzar and Paul had been opposed to God. Both had been persecutors of God’s people. Both had experienced “supernatural” events leading to their conversions. Both had come to know the Source of peace in their lives. And both wanted to share the truth of God’s love with others.

Notice that Nebuchadnezzar sought to know the inner workings of his mind in Daniel 2:30. In Daniel 2:1, the Bible says that he was “troubled” and unable to sleep, but when the purpose of prophecy has worked its way in the king’s life, he is now able to say with confidence that **peace is found in the True God of Heaven.**

Two Key Points:

1. When a person defies God’s will and lives a life out of harmony with His plan, lasting peace will not be found.
2. Both Paul and Nebuchadnezzar surrendered to the claims of the Spirit of God, and by doing so they found true and lasting peace.

Question: Can we find peace in our lives?

Yes! We can find peace just like Paul & Nebuchadnezzar did.

Isaiah 26:3 *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”*

Phil. 4:7 *“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

Gal. 5:22 *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ...”*

Rom 15:13 *“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”*

Key Point:

1. In verse 3, Nebuchadnezzar rejoices in the signs and wonders of God revealed in his life and in prophecy. It is important to note that signs and wonders can harden or soften hearts. Just like in the book of Exodus, when God was giving signs and wonders, through the ten plagues, trying to convince Pharaoh to let His people go from Egypt. Pharaoh hardened his heart. Each of us have a choice, when we hear God’s truths of the Bible, we either harden or soften our heart.
2. In verse 3, Nebuchadnezzar now recognizes the truth revealed to him in Daniel 2:44 that God’s kingdom is the only eternal kingdom.

Daniel 4:4-9

*“I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: **I saw a dream which made me afraid**, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. 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. Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. 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 before him I told the dream, saying, 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.”*

Nebuchadnezzar has another dream that troubled him. He starts out just like he did in chapter 2, calling his wise-men, magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. He seeks the wisdom of men, but as before, they are unable to help him. Now, even though he told them the dream, they still couldn't interpret it. Finally, Nebuchadnezzar called Daniel, showing he had not learned from the prior experience to seek God's truth first. Sometimes, just like Nebuchadnezzar, we resist the lessons God provides for our lives. We try everything else first, then, in desperation, we call out to God for help.

Nebuchadnezzar is troubled by a dream a second time. Just like he was when he had the dream of the image that had the head of gold, arms and chest of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, feet and toes of iron and clay, in Daniel two.

Key Point:

Nebuchadnezzar admitted that Daniel had the knowledge of the holy "gods" using the Chaldean word "*Elahiyn*." This is equivalent to the Hebrew word "*Elohiym*," for one god. Thus Nebuchadnezzar is acknowledging Daniel knows the one true God.

Daniel 4:10-18

*"Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: Nevertheless leave the stump of his 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: 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**. This matter 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 basest of men. This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, 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."*

Nebuchadnezzar describes the dream to Daniel. The first dream in Daniel 2 showed that God cared about his questions for the future. However, this second dream was given for a different reason (vs. 17), demonstrating that God rules over the kingdoms of men, and that He is able to remove and set up kings according to His will.

Key Points:

1. In verse 16, the word translated "**Time**," comes from the Aramaic word "**iddan**," **meaning a year**. Therefore, this describes Nebuchadnezzar's experience with losing his mind (going insane) for seven years.
2. In verse 17, the investigative activity of the "**watchers**" culminates in the judgment or "**decree**" which comes from the assembly or counsel of the "**Holy Ones**." This is a foretaste of the investigative heavenly judgment in Daniel 7:9, 10 when the books are opened at the end of time.

Daniel 7:9-10

*“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: **the judgment was set, and the books were opened.**”*

Key Point:

Just like king Belshazzar faced God’s judgment, we too will face God in the judgment.

Daniel 4:19

“Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.”

Daniel was stunned because he understood the dream. Even though Nebuchadnezzar had taken him and his friends captive, Daniel took no pleasure in telling Nebuchadnezzar the just punishment foretold by his dream. Daniel didn’t say, “It serves you right” because he knew he needed love and spiritual diplomacy to help Nebuchadnezzar. Like Christ, Daniel loved Nebuchadnezzar as a person and cared for his soul.

Daniel 4:20-26

Daniel interprets the dream.

*“**The tree** that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: **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. And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet 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**; This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee 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. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; **thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.**”*

Nebuchadnezzar is the “tree” that God would cut down and remove from power. Just as a stump is left, God showed Nebuchadnezzar that his kingdom will not be removed from him forever. “**Till seven times pass over him**” refers to seven years during which Nebuchadnezzar would be insane (vs. 23). Verse 25 give the purpose for God’s discipline: “**till thou know that the most High ruleth.**” In spite of this punishment, a special promise is given: “**thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.**” (vs. 26)

Daniel 4:27

“Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of

thy tranquillity.”

Key Point:

God, through Daniel, encouraged and warned Nebuchadnezzar to “**change his ways.**” This shows that God’s warnings of judgment are conditional. He warns the wicked to turn from the evil, and if they repent, God will not send evil on them. The book of Jonah illustrates this same truth.

Daniel 4:28-30

*“All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, **Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?**”*

Daniel warned Nebuchadnezzar to repent, and then God gave him 12 months to change his life by seeking Him. Yet the king refused to heed God’s warning and acknowledge that God was in control. Instead, Nebuchadnezzar spoke as if he were the god of his own life and took the credit for what he has done, supposedly by his own power and majesty. (vs. 30)

Daniel 4:31-33

*“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.** And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee 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. 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 hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.”*

At the end of twelve months, God can delay judgment no longer; the prophecy was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar becomes like a wild animal and was driven from his court as a mad man. There comes a time when God’s warnings become reality!

Daniel 4:34-37

*“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 honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: 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? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and **I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.** Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”*

Key Point:

In Verse 34: “***The End of the Days***”

Notice how the seven years of verse 23 are referred to as “*days.*” This gives us a hint of the “***day for a year***” principle in prophetic interpretation. For the use of the day/year principle, look at

Ezekiel 4:4-6, and Numbers 14:33-34.

Nebuchadnezzar's Conversion:

After 35 years of Daniel's witness, several revelations of God's power, and finally a judgment of insanity, Nebuchadnezzar was finally converted. Once he accepted the Lordship of God, God restored Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and majesty, even adding to his glory. God was able to do this because the king was repentant and now gives God the glory for everything.

Just as Nebuchadnezzar experienced conversion and salvation, and we can too! Let's look at this in four simple steps.

Simple Step 1: Acknowledge Our Need

Psalms 32:5 *"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."*

We need to recognize our need to be saved. The person that doesn't see his/her need, will not seek God's help.

Simple Step 2: Confess Our Sins

We need to confess our sins to God and those we have injured. Jesus tells us in **1 John 1:9**, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Simple Step 3: Born Again of Water and the Spirit

John 3:3-5

*"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God**. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."*

Jesus tells us that we need to be **"born again"** by water and the Spirit. What Does It Mean to be born again?

John 8:21-24

*"Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: **for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins**."*

Jesus tells us the problem: we are born with the sinful nature of the world. Christ tells us we need to be born again to enter into His kingdom, born from Above! In other words **we need a New Nature!** We need to be born of the *water through baptism*, symbolizing the death of our old man of sin and raised up out of the water into a newly resurrected life in Jesus.

Romans 6:3-6

*"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death**? Therefore we are **buried with him by baptism into death**: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness of life**. For if we have been planted together in the **likeness of his death**, we shall be also in the*

likeness of his resurrection: *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*”

As the Holy Dove rested upon Christ at His baptism, so we also will be born of the spirit, the *Holy Spirit*. We will stand perfect in Christ, clothed only in His precious blood-bought righteousness. Then our daily prayer will be, **“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me”** Psalms 51:10.

Simple Step 4: *Walking in the Light and abiding in Christ*

Matthew 7:21-23

*“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; **but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**”*

Jesus declares that preachers that prophesied, faith healers that healed, and people doing many wonderful works will be included in the group that He professes to them, **“I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”** Therefore, Jesus is calling us to, not just be religious, but spiritual. As baby Christians, we will grow up into the stature of Christ. Because of His power and love, we will do the will of the Father and not the works of iniquity because the Holy Spirit will guide us into ALL TRUTH. As we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, as we allow Him to make us willing to walk in the LIGHT, His perfect will is fulfilled in us. As He works *“In us both to will and to do of His good pleasure,”* He enables us to be obedient to all that He asks in His Word (see Phil. 2:13, John 3:18-19, Acts 5:32, Rom. 8:4).

The only way to surrender and stay surrendered daily is to walk in the light, by being obedient to the truths of God’s Word. John tells us *“If we walk in the light, as he (Jesus) is in the Light.”*

1 John 1:6-7

*“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: **But if we walk in the light,** as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**”*

Key Point:

The key is to invite Jesus into your heart, and surrendering your whole heart to Him. Let Him live out His life within you and keep that living connection alive every day by abiding in Christ and letting Him abide in you. For Jesus tells us...

John 15:4-7

*“**Abide in me, and I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. **I am the vine, ye are the branches:** He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. **If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.**”*

It is that living connection with Jesus that helps us to grow more and more like Him each day. The Holy Spirit will fill our lives as we study, helping us to understand and do the will of the Father. Jesus loves us so much that He was willing to lay down His life for each and every one of us.

John 15:13

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Today, He is calling you, just like He did Nebuchadnezzar, to love Him enough to follow Him and walk in His LIGHT. Will you make a decision to surrender to Him today?