

Hurst Green

10th Jun 2018

Daniel 4

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Tree

And now we have chapter four and another of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams but the way this is written is interesting.

You have probably spotted over the years that I am not a great one for taking the scriptures apart and analysing how they are written and I am that way because the scriptures are there for us all.

Many good men gave their lives that we might have the bible in English rather than Latin – These men were literally martyred because they believed we should be able to read the bible ourselves.

If you then need a whole set of specialist skills before you can understand the bible then we do not need the bible because we cannot understand it – that is not true. We can all understand all of the bible and all of it is good for our teaching and disciplining.

But this passage is a bit of a unique which I would like you to see and understand not least because it is interesting.

The first three chapters we have descriptions of events as Daniel and his friends become established in Babylon. These are typical historical stories that tell us what was happening and from which we can draw lessons as we have been doing over the last few weeks.

Lessons I hope you have remembered and are making part of your lives and today we will have another lesson but it is coming from a fascinating chapter.

This chapter is a letter from Nebuchadnezzar to his entire kingdom

Daniel 4:1 (ANIV)

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar, To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world: May you prosper greatly!

Now we have no one like this in the world today – we have the various political power blocks; Russia, China, USA, EU and others that rise and fall.

In Nebuchadnezzar's time he was the king over all of the known world.

Remember the statue in Chapter 2 when Daniel had not only to interpret the dream but also to tell Nebuchadnezzar what the dream was.

As part of his interpretation he said

Daniel 2:37-38 (ANIV)

³⁷ You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; ³⁸ in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

Nebuchadnezzar was as good as it was going to get – there after the kingdoms would be inferior.

This was the King who wrote this open letter to all his people to say how great our God is.

Did you catch that? He is saying to all his kingdom how great **our** God is.

This is still the King who does not seem to convert from his gods but he is now saying to all his people

Daniel 4:2-3 (ANIV)

² It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. ³ How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Here is a challenge for you – do you do that?

Is it your pleasure to tell of the miraculous signs and wonder that the most high God has performed for you?

Do you even know the miraculous signs and wonders? If not examine your life – they are there!

Some from my life:

- Coming to a conclusion in our insurance battle
- Even coming here in the first place when God changed my job to fit in with the work here.
- How God has moved me through various jobs having left the Army – how he has provided for me and my family way beyond anything I expected or needed.
- As we look to retirement how God has provided for that.

Know what God has done for you so that you can be ready to say it and acknowledge his mercies in your life.

That is your witness that cannot be denied.

What you have seen God do for you – its your view and others may say they do not agree but they cannot deny you your view.

So here is the king over the whole earth – a king who has acknowledged how great our God is on at least two occasions.

With his dream he said

Daniel 2:47 (ANIV)

⁴⁷ The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

And with the furnace he said

Daniel 3:28 (ANIV)

²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! ~~They trusted in him and defied the king's~~

~~command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.~~

And earlier he found their God had made them wise

Daniel 1:19-20 (ANIV)

¹⁹ The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. ²⁰ In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his whole kingdom.

And now he wants his whole Kingdom to know how great this God is and so is sending this open letter to all people. And a strange letter it is.

You might expect a letter saying how great he was and how mighty he was but instead we have a letter that tells us how vulnerable he is and how the almighty God has brought him as low as the animals of the field and all of this after God had told him that he needed to humble himself.

But like all mankind he did not and so God humbled him and he was prepared to acknowledge it.

He had this terrible dream

God sent Daniel to interpret the dream.

And Daniel went further

Daniel 4:27 (ANIV)

²⁷ Therefore, O king, 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."

But he did not

Daniel 4:29-30 (ANIV)

²⁹ Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰ 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?"

And his dream came to pass but I have a lesson for you in this. I hope none of you has to go as far as the King before you will acknowledge God but the King had to come to repentance before he was restored and the lesson of repentance is the one I want to lay before you today.

Daniel 4:34-35 (ANIV)

³⁴ At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes towards heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honoured and glorified him who lives for ever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. ³⁵ 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?"

The first thing in repentance is the true acknowledgment of the almighty God. This confession is no trivial thing.

It acknowledges God as almighty, his eternal dominion, his power to do as he pleases and that none of us can stop God.

Do you acknowledge God like that?

Even more do you acknowledge that bit in verse 35 where compared to god all of us are as nothing.

We know God loves us and cares for each one of us but it does us good to acknowledge that compared to God we are nothing.

All that we are comes from God loving us and not from anything we are or anything we could do.

But most of all we need to get with the King in verse 37

Daniel 4:37 (ANIV)

³⁷ 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.

Despite all he has been through or actually because of all he has been through Nebuchadnezzar announces to his people that he praises, exalts and glorifies God.

And most importantly for repentance he announces that all God's ways are right and just. God is right and just in seeing us as sinners because that is what we are.

Until we repent, acknowledge God as almighty and confess our sins when God forgives us and makes us righteous before him and we stand as the redeemed.