

Patient Progression

Long Beach Alliance Church • July 19, 2015 • Pastor Chris Lankford

His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"

~Daniel 4:34c-35 (ESV)

1) Nebuchadnezzar's Journey Continues

- A) When we first meet King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (605BC-562BC), he is the destroyer of Jerusalem, taking and killing King Jehoiakim of the Southern Kingdom of Judah in Israel (Daniel 1:-2).**
- B) Nebuchadnezzar does not care at all about God. He seizes holy vessels of worship from the Jerusalem temple to place them in his own treasury, and seizes the most prized young men and women of Israel for exile and reeducation in his home country of Babylon, far to the East (1:2-7).**
- C) The faith of four young Jewish teenagers in exile (Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) provides them with political positions of influence through the miraculous provisions of God (1:20, 2:48-49, 3:29).**
- D) It is significant to note that each time a miracle happens, King Nebuchadnezzar is a witness. While God's miracles provide salvation for many through our four "super-heroes," the miracles are also specific revelations of God to King Nebuchadnezzar which slowly grow his faith.**
- E) While God's blessings primarily exist to reveal His own glory, don't miss that God's greatness is most vivid in bringing salvation to those who do not yet know Him. The primary example of someone who does not know God in Daniel's story is King Nebuchadnezzar. In many ways, this is a book about King Nebuchadnezzar's faith journey!**

2) The Terrifying Birth Of A Nightmare

- A) The source material for Daniel 4 is King Nebuchadnezzar (note 4:1, 4), potentially making this the only section of the Bible written by a pagan. While Daniel is the author (note 4:19a), the material is a first-person account of the King.**
- B) As happened early in King Nebuchadnezzar's reign (2:1), the King once again has a disturbing nightmare. Unable to wake, his mind "births" terrifying images which shatter his "ease" and "luxurious" life in the palace (4:4-5)**
- C) The King's advisors can't provide answers (4:7, 18), but to the King's great relief, Daniel finally arrives. God's Spirit is within Daniel (4:8), and he has come to reveal mysteries.**
- D) Nebuchadnezzar tells Daniel about his dream of a colossal tree growing into the heavens which gave safety, shelter, and provision for all. Suddenly, at the order of an angel, the tree is chopped down and shackled as it seemingly transforms into a man. The tree/man is judged as a grotesque wild beast for seven years, all for understanding that the "Most High" is ruler over all things (4:10-17).**
- E) No doubt, the Jews experienced favorable treatment under Nebuchadnezzar's reign, and Daniel had served over 50 years with the King, who was probably his friend. Daniel was aghast at the King's vision, alarmed to the point where the King offers Daniel comfort (4:19)!**
- F) Daniel faithfully interprets King Nebuchadnezzar's vision for him, dramatically telling him "You are the tree in the vision" (4:22)! Daniel pleads with the King to "break away" (repent) from sin and turn to God (righteousness) for the sake of peace for both King and Kingdom (4:27).**

3) An Arrogant King Is Chopped Down

- A) An entire year passed. Daniel and his warning are nothing more than a distant nightmare. The King surveys and voices wonder at his majestic empire. Then, when he least expected it, the King's life was forever changed (4:29-31).**
- B) Daniel's prediction of God's judgment arrives, and for seven years the King lives as a wild grotesque beast (4:31-33). Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation leads him to "come to his senses" and recognize God as Sovereign King (4:34-35).**
- C) In a battle between God's Kingdom and any "Babylon," God reigns supreme. God chops down the arrogant pride of man with humbling circumstances (4:37). Whether a government or an individual, we cannot thrive unless God's kingship in our lives is recognized and followed!**