

Bible Study • By Faith – An In-depth look at Hebrews 11

Lesson #43 • Hebrews 11:33b-34

Victory Over Circumstances

**“Shutting the Mouths of Lions &
Quenching the fury of the flames”**

Daniel • Part 3 of 6

• H A N D O U T •

We now begin chapter 4

Nebuchadnezzar's attitude toward the Most High God seems different. He relates the cause of this change by using a flash-back narrative and the majority of the study will take place in this “flash-back mode.”

*Daniel 4:1-3 • King Nebuchadnezzar sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world: "Peace and prosperity to you! **"I want you all to know about the miraculous signs and wonders the Most High God has performed for me. How great are His signs, how powerful His wonders! His kingdom will last forever, His rule through all generations."***

Q: How do we know that this change is genuine and not just political rhetoric?

**Nebuchadnezzar describes a new dream he had
and how it manifested itself in Nebuchadnezzar's life.**

Daniel 4:4-6; 8-9 • "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living in my palace in comfort and prosperity.5 But one night I had a dream that frightened me; I saw visions that terrified me as I lay in my bed. 6 So I issued an order calling in all the wise men of Babylon, so they could tell me what my dream meant ... but none could tell what it meant.

At last Daniel came in before me, and I told him the dream. (He was named Belteshazzar after my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

"I said to him, 'Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too great for you to solve. Now tell me what my dream means.

Q: Why does Nebuchadnezzar seem to digress and explain what Daniel's Babylonian name is and how he sees the “spirit of the holy gods in him?”

Q: Why does Nebuchadnezzar use the plural “gods” with a small “g” when describing the spirit he sees in Daniel?

Q: Considering Daniel's excellent track record with dreams why was Daniel not consulted right from the beginning?

Nebuchadnezzar describes his dream ...

Daniel 4:10-18 · "While I was lying in my bed, this is what I dreamed. I saw a large tree in the middle of the earth. The tree grew very tall and strong, reaching high into the heavens for all the world to see. It had fresh green leaves, and it was loaded with fruit for all to eat. Wild animals lived in its shade, and birds nested in its branches. All the world was fed from this tree.

"Then as I lay there dreaming, I saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. The messenger shouted, "Cut down the tree and lop off its branches! Shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit! Chase the wild animals from its shade and the birds from its branches. But leave the stump and the roots in the ground, bound with a band of iron and bronze and surrounded by tender grass.

Now let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the wild animals among the plants of the field. For seven periods of time, let him have the mind of a wild animal instead of the mind of a human. For this has been decreed by the messengers; it is commanded by the holy ones, so that everyone may know that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world. He gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men."

"Belteshazzar, that was the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now tell me what it means, for none of the wise men of my kingdom can do so. But you can tell me because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.'

- Q: What was notable about this tree that was in the midst of the earth?
- Q: What were the details the messenger from heaven gave regarding the tree?
- Q: What did this tree represent?
- Q: What purpose was given for this dramatic change?
- Q: Why would this stated purpose be a startling message to the ancient world?

Nebuchadnezzar asks Daniel to interpret the dream ...

Daniel 4:18-19 · "Belteshazzar, that was the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now tell me what it means, for none of the wise men of my kingdom can do so. But you can tell me because the spirit of the holy gods is in you."

Upon hearing this, Daniel (also known as Belteshazzar) was overcome for a time, frightened by the meaning of the dream.

Then the king said to him, 'Belteshazzar, don't be alarmed by the dream and what it means.'

"Belteshazzar replied, 'I wish the events foreshadowed in this dream would happen to your enemies, my lord, and not to you!'

► At this point, Daniel repeats to Nebuchadnezzar everything the king had described, down to the finest details, confirming to the King that Daniel was seeing what the king had described to him.

Q: Why would Daniel repeat, verbatim, the description of the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had just described to him?

Q: Why would Daniel tell the King he wished that the events from his dream would happen to the King's enemies, and not to the King?

Q: What does this tell us about the relationship between Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar?

Daniel begins with the interpretation ...

Daniel 4:22-27 • That tree, Your Majesty, is you. For you have grown strong and great; your greatness reaches up to heaven, and your rule to the ends of the earth.

"Then you saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, "Cut down the tree and destroy it. But leave the stump and the roots in the ground, bound with a band of iron and bronze and surrounded by tender grass. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven. Let him live with the animals of the field for seven periods of time."

"This is what the dream means, Your Majesty, and what the Most High has declared will happen to my lord the king. You will be driven from human society, and you will live in the fields with the wild animals. You will eat grass like a cow, and you will be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses.

But the stump and roots of the tree were left in the ground. This means that you will receive your kingdom back again when you have learned that heaven rules.

"King Nebuchadnezzar, please accept my advice. Stop sinning and do what is right. Break from your wicked past and be merciful to the poor. Perhaps then you will continue to prosper."

Q: In the midst of really bad news, what is the good news that Daniel relays to Nebuchadnezzar?

Q: What is the passage of time of "seven periods?"

Q: What are these four factors to consider before coming to a conclusion?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Q: What conclusion can we make concerning how long Nebuchadnezzar was out in the field behaving like an animal?

If literal "years" is meant = _____

If "seasons" were meant = _____

If "months" were meant = _____

The fulfillment of the dream ...

Daniel 4:28-33 · "But all these things did happen to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later he was taking a walk on the flat roof of the royal palace in Babylon. As he looked out across the city, he said, 'Look at this great city of Babylon! By my own mighty power, I have built this beautiful city as my royal residence to display my majestic splendor.'

"While these words were still in his mouth, a voice called down from heaven, 'O King Nebuchadnezzar, this message is for you! You are no longer ruler of this kingdom. You will be driven from human society. You will live in the fields with the wild animals, and you will eat grass like a cow. Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone He chooses.'

"That same hour the judgment was fulfilled, and Nebuchadnezzar was driven from human society. He ate grass like a cow, and he was drenched with the dew of heaven. He lived this way until his hair was as long as eagles' feathers and his nails were like birds' claws.

Q: Why was there a 12-month delay between Daniel interpreting the dream and the fulfillment?

Proverbs 6:16-19 · There are six things the Lord hates – no, seven things he detests: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a family.

James 4:6-7 · As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you.

Q: Was Nebuchadnezzar's opinion of Babylon and his accomplishment justified?

A repentant Nebuchadnezzar is restored, and praises God ...

Daniel 4:34-37 · "After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever.

'His rule is everlasting, and his kingdom is eternal. All the people of the earth are nothing compared to him. He does as he pleases among the angels of heaven and among the people of the earth. No one can stop him or say to him, 'What do you mean by doing these things?'

"When my sanity returned to me, so did my honor and glory and kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored as head of my kingdom, with even greater honor than before.

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and He is able to humble the proud."

Q: What does the phrase, "after this time had passed" tell us?

Q: What is surprising about Nebuchadnezzar's return to the throne?

Q: What is the lesson we can learn from this miraculous restoration?

2 Peter 3:9 · The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.



Next Time ◆ Lesson #44

"Daniel – Part 4 of 6"

