

There is a song that was written a loooong time ago. It has been redone by a few artist throughout the years. Its called Farther along. The lyrics talk about how the we see others living among us who are never miss treated even though they are in the wrong. And we wonder how others prosper, while living so wicked year after year.

We see this even today, people who are living on top of the world. Successful, wealthy, don't have to worry about money or anything else.... By the worlds standards. They seem to effortlessly glide through life, maybe having small issues or problems but for the most part getting by very easy. From the outside they seem happy, and content with their lives, but inside they are filled with hatred, greed and selfishness. Now not all wealthy people are that way, not everyone who is successful is hateful, but this world has its fair share of them who are.

All this while Christians are told that this life will be hard, we will suffer and sacrifice in the Lord's name. Most of the least fortunate people....by the worlds standards that I know are Christians. And yet for the most part are also the most content and happy folks you'll ever meet. They are not worried about leaving some big legacy, or having millions in the bank. God helps to understand that this place is temporary, that the things that we have here are all going to be given up.

Some of us may have been those individuals living on top of the world before we accepted Jesus, and I don't want it to seem like it is wrong if you are not borderline living in a cardboard box. But it is easy to get a big head about what we have, and what we have accomplished. At some point we all had to be humbled. This is what we will be reading about today.

Daniel 4 1:18

The acknowledgement, The Inquiring, The humbling

The acknowledgement

Vs 1 We have read about all the horrible things that King Nebuchadnezzar had done. But we start off this chapter with a little different outlook.

-To the nations, and people of every language who live in all the earth. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was vast, and very powerful, but not the entire world. But this letter is being written from the king to everyone the same, and as his blessing to all.

Vs 2 He is praising God, giving honor to God, acknowledging that Gods kingdom is an eternal kingdom. He is clearly proclaiming that The Most High God has shown him miraculous signs and wonders that have often been in his favor.

-In chapter 2 Nebuchadnezzar's first dream is told and interpreted to him. He gets to see the entire span of mans rule over the earth, and how it will be replaced with God's eternal kingdom.

-In chapter 3 we read about how God fully delivered three young men from the flames and the smoke of a fire that was hot enough to kill those even getting close. The king witnessed this and declared that no one should say anything against God, or he would have them cut to pieces.

-This kind of acknowledgement is not common for a king to do, especially a king such as Nebuchadnezzar. He was definitely the type who was never wrong, he thought that he would rule forever and after he did pass, his kingdom would continue on like he was still running the show.

Vs 3 The king has experience with God's mighty signs and continues to praise Him, Nebuchadnezzar is finally grasping that his earthly kingdom will not last forever, but accepts that God's kingdom is everlasting.

-We all have to come to terms with the fact that as long as we are in charge of it, it will fall. No matter how great, wonderful or amazing it is, it is temporary. Only God is eternal.

The acknowledgement, The Inquiring

Vs 4 The world often feels content, they feel like everything is going pretty good, like they have everything under control. And sometimes that is exactly how it looks when believers see the ungodly going through life with what seems like no strife, no real trials. Sometimes they are even quite successful, with what the world looks at as success.

-Entrepreneurs, high salary jobs, wealthy, big fancy homes, a collection of cars, trucks, boats..... You know the things that make it look like you have "arrived". All that is just a false sense of security. Those things do not mean anything, and they can be taken away in an instant.

-I will tell you those things are nice to look at, maybe nice to have but I don't want people to think that I have made it because of all the stuff I have, remember he who dies with the most toys.... Still dies. I just want Jesus so that I can have the opportunity to "arrive" where it matters most.

Vs 5-7 This dream was not like the king's other dream where he couldn't remember what he had dreamt, he was able to explain with detail what he saw. But his magicians and enchanters could not or would not interpret the dream. I think this is for two reasons, #1 they remember the previous dreams repercussions and did not want to make a mistake, #2 they did understand the dream but did not want to tell the king what it meant for fear of him lashing out at them. Either way, to them it spelled disaster.

Vs 8 Finally, why would Daniel have been the last to be called for. The king called him chief of the magicians, and I understand that maybe the guys are lower on the chain and would go first and the top guys only show up if they are really needed.

-The way I see it is, it was then, just as it is now. People only turn to God or His followers when they have run out of their own ideas. The world doesn't want anything to do with God until they have exhausted every other option. These folks clearly have heard of God, have been told about the amazing things He has done for others, seen otherwise unexplainable things if it wasn't God. Otherwise, how would they know to finally turn to Him?

-They realize or remember that God is merciful and full of grace and expect Him to all of sudden want to bless ungodly people in Godly ways.

-Can I tell you that is not how it works. God wants bless us, he is ready and willing to pour out all that we need... If we are ready to repent of our sinful ways, and fully turn our lives over to Him. This is not an every once in a while type of relationship, either you're all in or you're not in at all.

- So the king is ready to hear from a Godly man because no one else is able or willing to do what the king requests.

- Nebuchadnezzar knew that Daniel and his companions were God-fearing men for a few reasons. Daniel was able to pray to God and get the interpretation of his previous dream, he saw the son of God in the blazing furnace with Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego who completely protected them from the flames and even the smoke. But this was not enough to get the king to fully convert from his Babylonian gods.

- Remember Daniel's name in Babylon was Belteshazzar which meant Bel protect the king. Bel is Babylon word for Lord and referred to Marduk who was the chief god of the city. Usually thought to control order and destiny.

Vs 9 After explaining what the king dreamt and interpreting the dream the last time Daniel got a pretty significant promotion, this was the title he received the chief of magicians. He was highly regarded throughout Babylon.

-How the king brings this up is very similar to how the Pharaoh speaks of Joseph in Genesis 41. Then Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?"

-Nebuchadnezzar knows that Daniel has a direct line to God and that God makes even difficult or impossible things known to him. He doesn't even give Daniel a chance to answer, he just gets right into the dream.

Vs 10-12 It was seen that this tree was enormous, so big that it could be seen from the ends of the earth. This tree provided food, shelter and a place to rest for all living things. It was beautiful,

-The last time we heard of something so large it was attempting to breach the earthly and heavenly divide, of course it was the tower of Babel. Man thought they could build themselves up to the level of God, and because of those folks, now we have Spanish.

-How many bilingual folks do we have here? I've heard that English is the hardest language to learn, maybe it's just me but I haven't heard any other language that seems easy for me to learn. Does that make me smart for knowing the hardest one, or dumb for not being able to learn any of the others?

-This would be a dream come true for most kings, to see that their kingdom was so vast. So large that it provided everything for so many living creatures. We know what happened to the tower, now we will see what happens to Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom.

The acknowledgement, The Inquiring, The humbling

Vs 13 In other translations the word messenger is actually watcher and the translation from the Hebrew is "awr" and it used 80 times in the old testament and in all those times it means "awake" or "to stir". But in this chapter, it is translated as "watcher", all three times it is used. It has been translated the same way in other religious books.

-Strange how someone who is asleep sees a being named a watcher, whose name means awake. We also see this being called "a holy one."

Vs 14 Here the king hears a devastating command to cut down the tree, strip it of its leaves and branches. All of the animals are sent off and its fruit is to be scattered.

-The great tree would lose its grandeur; it would be reduced to almost nothing. The stump was ordered to be left alone and not dug up. A stump that is left alone and allowed for its roots to be in the soil and to be watered will usually sprout new trees from it.

-Job even talks about it in 14:7-9. "For there is hope for a tree, when it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and its roots will not fail. Though its roots grow old in the ground and its stump dies in the dry soil, at the scent of water it will flourish and put forth sprigs like a plant."

-This stump was to be banded with iron and bronze. These were the strongest two metals they had available at the time and would have stopped the tree from being able to regenerate new sprouts. This is indicating the stump was no longer free and great, it seems to restrain it from growing... at least temporarily. Why else would the bands be put on, if it was meant to be permanent the stump would have been removed from the ground to destroy it.

Vs 15-16 So we see that it is not just his kingdom but more about the king being cut down.

-This is how we have to deal with if we want to have a meaningful relationship with Christ, if we are not humbled, we cannot accept Him for who he is. If I continue to think that all I have, and all I am able to do is because of me, I would never truly turn my life over to Jesus. I would think that I have it all under control... until I didn't!

-The word here for mind in Hebrew means "inner man", "will" or "heart" so Nebuchadnezzar will be demoted to the basic level of an animal. He will have to start over and learn to trust God through his new beginning.

Vs 17 This verdict is clear and firm, it speaks of humbling a great king. I can see why his magicians, enchanters and wise men did not want to interpret this dream for him. Who wants to tell the king that they are about to get demoted?

-See God has the power to do as He pleases with us, being the Most High God, He is the rightful ruler and has ultimate authority over everything. With that, He is able to give power to whom ever He wishes, or take away power from those who have it.

-It says He gives power to the lowliest of men. That word lowliest in Aramaic is "shephal" and at its roots means "humble". So if you are the type of person who thinks you are a one man or woman team, that you don't need anyone else to help you get to the top. You have made it this far without anyone else's help and you will continue to make it alone. You think that YOU have it all together, or that you are something special. God can humble us anytime He wants for any reason He wants.

Vs 18 Even though the truth may be hard to hear, Nebuchadnezzar knew that Daniel was a man of God and he would get an honest answer from him.

-If we have an honest relationship with Jesus, that is how we should be too. Others should know that if questioned we will give an honest and biblical response. Sometimes that means we must remain silent while we request wisdom from God.

- Do you think after reading through this, that one day God will be sending an axe your way? DO you need to be cut down to become more humble and usable for the Most High God?

