

Chapter 1 Nebuchadnezzar invades Jerusalem and captures Daniel and some others, he brings them back to Babylon to teach them their ways. Daniel and his friends decide not to give in on God, they ask for the opportunity to not defile themselves with the king's food. They worshiped a different God than the Babylonians and it clear that these young men had something, knew something different.

Chapter 2 the king has a dream that no one could interpret, and so Daniel gets his second chance to show the king who his God is and the power He has.

Chapter 3 Nebuchadnezzar thinks, I will build a statue, a statue so large that it would demand attention and he would demand everyone to bow to it. But Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego refused to bow, and the king followed through with his promise to punish anyone who did not bow. They were thrown into the fiery furnace. But to Nebuchadnezzars surprise, he saw four figures in the fire after only throwing 3 in and not only did they not burn up, but they came without even smelling like smoke. So, Nebuchadnezzar is experiencing Gods power to save. Power unlike anything he had ever seen.

Now in Chapter 4 Nebuchadnezzar is seeing the truth about God, and the power of God. Remember last time we talked about Nebuchadnezzars 2nd dream, another one that all his magicians, wisemen, and enchanters could not interpret. Once again Daniel is called on to see if him and his God could interpret it. The dream was of a mighty tree that grew to the heavens, it fed and gave shade to everyone and everything around.

So, we see Daniel and his compadres remembering where they came from even as a new culture and education was forced upon them, we see them remember the things of the Lord that mattered to their way of life, we see them remain faithful to God through all adversity and fully trust God for their protection and wisdom. Through this chapter we will see something else.

What is the best part of an action movie? If you ask me, it is the chase scene, it usually involves cars, trucks, motorcycles, semi's, maybe a bicycle. What ever it has, it is the best part! The more turns, and flips, explosions and speeding it has the better it is. Although it does need to be believable! We will see God has the best chase scene of all. This whole time God is chasing after Nebuchadnezzar, through his dreams, through people God has placed in his life and through all of Nebuchadnezzars attempts to allude God, God never gave up on him.

Sense the creation of man God has been chasing us down, wanting us to turn to Him, wanting us to see His relentless love.

**Courage, Pride, Restoration**

**Vs 19** Can you feel Daniels compassion for the King? He is not wanting this to be about the king, he would rather it be about his enemies. Talk about loving your enemies, Nebuchadnezzar was an enemy of Daniel's. Remember he captured him, changed his name, and tried to get him to forget his heritage and his God. But Daniel does not stop being compassionate.

How are you doing in that department? I would have to say that I have gotten better but man I am no where near that level. Some people (my wife and kids) would say that I have no compassion but deep down I think they really feel that way. But can you say that you are that compassionate, can you say that you treat your enemies like Daniel is treating someone who has done so much bad to him? Imagine how

much better you can treat others who are not your enemies. We say we want to make a difference in this world how about we start with how we treat others.

**Vs 22-25** Daniel did not want to hurt Nebuchadnezzar, he did not want to cut him down and crush him, but he knew that he had to tell him the truth of what the dream meant, he cared for the king.

We think it is hard to tell others about God, to tell them of Jesus' sacrifice for them. We fear what they will think, what they may say. Daniel truly faced death, multiple times but stood on his faith in God knowing that He would take care of him either way. What is it that is stopping you from that kind of faith in our creator, the one who recklessly pursues and loves us?

We must have courage to tell others what maybe hard to say but is necessary for them to hear. It may be hard but sometimes the truth hurts. Do we care enough for the soul of others that we may enter into a difficult conversation? Putting away our fear and leading with the love of God.

**Vs 26-27** Daniel is leading with love right there, he is looking to lift Nebuchadnezzar up and give him hope. He tells the king that the stump will remain, which means his kingdom will be re-established. The tree could have been ripped from the ground, dug up and discarded destroyed forever.

God could have ended it all for Nebuchadnezzar, he could have chosen to pull the wicked king off the throne and simply given it to the next king. But He has a plan for Nebuchadnezzar.

This does not have to be the end. IF you will repent of your sins, let go of your wickedness and trust God, He will restore you to the fullness that He has planned for your life. He is saying please accept what I have told you. Heed the warning, listen to me closely.

This was like talking to a teenager, how many of you all have kids? How many of you have made mistakes? Looking back how many times where your parents right about something that didn't work out the way you planned it? Now its all you can do to explain to your kids, that you can see the mistakes they are about to make, and you just want to help them see how you know it will turn out.

The king was not only supposed to repent and turn from his sin but also be a better king to his kingdom. A king who rules with absolute control is dangerous, they may do ok sometimes with asking for advice or council, but they will eventually feel strong enough about a topic that they will do whatever it takes to get their way. We have seen this from King Nebuchadnezzar.

Be good to the people of your kingdom, and all those you encounter. Then your prosperity will be given back to you.

1<sup>st</sup> point was **Courage**, 2<sup>nd</sup> point is **Pride**.

**Vs 28-30** So Daniel gives the king the interpretation and I'm sure Nebuchadnezzar thought that his kingdom would last for a long time so he wouldn't have to worry about the dream coming true anytime soon. Then 12 months later it happens!

What do we do after that much time passes? We forget about what was to come. I mean I need a reminder to renew my tags, schedule a check up with my doctor and when I need to buy an anniversary

card. So, do you think the king felt like maybe Daniel was wrong about the dream, or maybe because he was so great that he received some divine forgiveness or maybe he simply forgot?

He was pretty great, wasn't he? From his palace roof top, he could see all that he had built, a great kingdom that worshiped him and all his majesty. This is definition of pride, look at me and how great I am, and it is always about me, me, me! If that doesn't entitle him to some forgiveness what else would?

What else do we know about pride? It has its way of making us see things through an unrealistic filter. It makes us forget that there are our people living around us, it makes us think that we actually have everything under control and that we have done it all on our own.

What if he just forgot? I started having trouble remembering things several years ago, and when I tell someone that, their response every time is, it gets worse with age. If you tell people that please stop, it is very discouraging, I may not remember how old I am but I know I am getting older so it must still be getting worse. I am thinking that as I get older, I will have to video my whole day just so I can remember what happened. I'm afraid I would just end up with a bunch of videos that I wouldn't remember to watch.

**Vs 31-33** Now God has waited long enough, it's been 12 months and the king has had ample time to change his ways, to repent and do as Daniel told him he would have to do. So, in true Godly fashion He steps right in where Nebuchadnezzar was, He wasn't waiting any longer.

God has the right and ability to kick in our door when you won't answer the knock. He will come to you right where you are, right in the middle of all your sin, all the devastation you have poured out on others. He can take everything that you thought you built in the blink of an eye and destroy it or give it to someone else.

This is exactly what He does to Nebuchadnezzar, He tells him that everything he has will be taken away and he will be like the ox of the field. He even tells him how long it will take for the king to recognize the real King. As Nebuchadnezzar was the king of his little kingdom here on earth God is showing him that He is God of all things heaven and earth. Proving that God holds the authority to give and take power from anyone He chooses.

Nebuchadnezzar's time was up, it says immediately what had been said was fulfilled. This seems harsh, that the king loses his kingdom, his power, and his mind. He lives like animals, eating grass and having no place to call home. I wonder if last year when Daniel interpreted the dream that the king thought all that would be so literal. But it could have been worse, God could have said OK Nebuchadnezzar have it your way. He could have left Nebuchadnezzar to live in his sin permanently condemning him to a life without God.

Friends let me tell you, whether you are sitting in church right now, watching from home or living your life as you see fit. The absolute worst possible scenario for any of us is for God to say "OK, Bob, Kristy, Tom, Kelly, Edd..... have it your way" From that moment on you will start to understand what that really looks like. Whether you believe in God or not He is holding your whole universe together.

Some critics try to discount Nebuchadnezzar's madness, saying that there was no historical evidence that this happened. The leaders of this time were really good at blowing their own trumpets when they did something great or even good. They were just as good at hiding their embarrassments. Through all the

records of that time it actually shows no governmental activity between 582 B.C. and 575 B.C. We all know God doesn't really do coincidences.

Our 1<sup>st</sup> point was **Courage**, 2<sup>nd</sup> point was **Pride**, now our 3<sup>rd</sup> point is **Restoration**.

**Vs 34-37** These are the words of a changed man. Nebuchadnezzar went from stealing items from the temple in Jerusalem and placing them in the temples of his gods, killing people for not worshipping his statue to now praising God.

Nebuchadnezzar just like us can not break free from the wages of sin. For until God says ok that's enough, we can not change our sinful ways. We must humble ourselves to the point of realizing that God is God, and I am not. That all I have, all that I am is because God gave it to me. We can only see the truth of who we are after we truly see who God is.

Spurgeon said, "The God whom we serve not only exists, but reigns!" God has unlimited sovereignty.

God did not want to cut Nebuchadnezzar down for ever. Neither is His goal to cut you down forever. God wants to restore you, restore you to your proper place. If you're in a prideful place and you have been turning your back on God, maybe today He is calling you to repent. Turn away from your sins before you have to be cut down.

The main point here is that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. If you had to be honest with yourself which side of the scale do you land on? The side of pride or humility?