

Spiritual Growth Questions for April 16, 2023

Opener: How is it tempting to privatize your faith?

- I. **Read Daniel 4:1-3, 34-37.** These verses are most likely written by Nebuchadnezzar. What encourages you from these verses? What did King Nebuchadnezzar learn most about God, according to the words of in these verses?
- II. **Read Daniel 4:3, 17,25, 26, 32,34, 4:37** *king of heaven*. What message do these verses convey? **Read Matthew 6:10.** Why is this message so important in our daily walk and witness?
- III. **Read Daniel 4:10-18.** In your own words describe the tree in his dream. What made the tree so valuable? What did the watcher say would happen to the man (the tree)? (15b-16)
- IV. **Read Daniel 4:19-27.** Why do you think Daniel hesitates in sharing the interpretation of the dream? What are the potential risks for speaking hard truths to hard hearts? What does Daniel tell Nebuchadnezzar he must do? (Vs.27) What does the stump represent? How does it symbolize hope?
- V. **Read Daniel 4:28-33, Acts 12:20-23.** In what ways was Herod similar to Nebuchadnezzar? Why is that power seems to go hand in hand with pride? How did their outcomes differ? In what areas of your life (career, accomplishments, financial status or natural abilities) are you like Nebuchadnezzar, failing to acknowledge God's authority and instead, exalting yourself? What do you need to do? How does a person remain humble?
- VI. How does your approach to witness, and the content of your witness, compare to Daniel's? How might his shape yours? Do you speak to others about Christ in order to see results, or to be faithful? How would the latter motivation give you more incentive to keep on sharing Christ? Who are you **BLESS**ing this week? May we join with you in prayer for that person.

Deeper Study: How does the use of the "tree" imagery in Daniel 4 compare with its representation of Assyria in Ezekiel 31 (vs.31:18)? Compare also Psalm 1:3; 37:35-36; 52:8; 92:12; Jeremiah 11:16-17; 17:8. What are the differences between the ungodly and ungodly? What lessons do you see?

Prayer: Dear Sovereign Lord, my pride has nearly ruined me. Your power has nearly overwhelmed me, and I have been brought low. Please change me. Put new clothes upon me. Give to me the robes of Christ's righteousness, that I may rise from this desperate and deranged state and give you the praise that is due you from me."

Living for God in a Broken World: A Study of Daniel Being A Faithful Witness in a Broken World Daniel 4 April 16, 2023, Pastor John Lloyd

How do we live for God in ungodly times-like our own. Is it worth standing firm and obeying God when His kingdom seems so far away? How can we live courageously and confidently in nations that do not seek to live under God's rule? How is it possible to be a blessing to our nations and show the power and goodness of our God, even in a time such as ours? This is the context that Daniel found himself in. This story will exalt God as king and His kingdom in ways that will ultimately find their fulfillment in Jesus. Today, we find Daniel needing to interpret a troubling dream to his king. Daniel will model for us what it looks like to be a faithful witness in a broken world. Thanking God that he can redeem even a stump! His kingdom is greater than my kingdom!

Daniel 4:1 King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! 2 It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. 3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation. 4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. 5 I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. 6 So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation. 8 At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods¹—and I told him the dream, saying,⁹ "O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. 10 The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. 11 The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. 12 Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it. 13 "I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. 14 He proclaimed aloud and said thus: 'Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. 15 But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. 16 Let his mind be changed from a man's and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. 17 The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it

The introduction and the dream (vv. 4–18)
The interpretation of the dream (vv. 19–27)
The humiliation of the dreamer (vv. 28–33)
The exaltation of the dreamer (vv. 34–37).

**Big Idea: God and His kingdom is greater than me and my kingdom!
God's kingdom is greater than mine!**

I. God's kingdom is _____ and _____ all other kingdoms.

Daniel 4:1 King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! 2 It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. 3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation. Daniel 4:34-36

Daniel 4:37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

**God can reach the most powerful/proudest person in the world!
God's kingdom is greater than mine!**

II. Every person will reach a _____. Be _____!

Daniel 4:4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. 5 I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me (4:6-13)

Daniel 4:8 At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods¹—and I told him the dream, saying, 9 “O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. (Psalm 37:35-36)

Why is it so common for those with immense God-given talent and those who are able to accomplish great things to forget the One ultimately responsible for their success?

You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. Deut.8:18 (see I Corinthians 4:7)

All earthly kingdoms are temporary. God can humble those who are proud. God's kingdom is greater than mine!

III. Thank God that He can _____ a_____.

Daniel 4:15 But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. 16 Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. (See and reflect on Isaiah 59:1-2)

Daniel 4:22 it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. ²³ And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,’

God can redeem anyone! God's kingdom is greater than mine!

IV. God has equipped believers with what we _____ to _____. Holy Spirit

Daniel 4:8 At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods¹—and I told him the dream, saying, ⁹ “O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the **spirit of the holy gods** is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. (Daniel 4:18-19)

I Corinthians 3:6-8 sow, plant, God gives the increase. Be a sower, Luke 8:11-16) **BLESS** Begin with prayer, **Listen**, **Eat** together, **Serve** sacrificially, **Share** your story! My life before, how I came to meet Jesus, how my life has changed. John 9:25 One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see!
Who are you blessing this week?

Daniel 4:34 At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation
4:37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Philippians 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**Lord, I want to be faithful witness of the greatness of Your Kingdom!
I want to BLESS others this week! God's kingdom is greater than mine!**