

Bible Stories

DANIEL - A CONVERSION STORY

Daniel 4:37

June 03, 2023

Chapter 4 of Daniel is written in the first person. It is Nebuchadnezzar's own account of his conversion:

King Nebuchadnezzar, to the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world: May you prosper greatly! It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Years passed ---- Nebuchadnezzar had made a name for himself as a great general, architect and statesman and he was proud of all he had accomplished. He was also stubborn. The God of Heaven had revealed himself many times to this pagan king, yet Nebuchadnezzar still refused to yield. Even so, God was not willing to give up - He still wanted Nebuchadnezzar's heart, so, once again the king had a dream in the night. He remembered this one, but didn't know what it meant. His sorcerers could not interpret it for him, but he knew one person who could ---- Daniel.

After Nebuchadnezzar told him the dream, Daniel {also Belteshazzar} became terrified and he hesitated. He was loath to tell the king what the dream meant. Choices would have to be made with one catastrophic consequence lurking in the shadows.

The king noticed Daniel's hesitation and encouraged him to reveal the meaning of the dream.

"My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth, and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged -- it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth... the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, "Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him. Now this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: that you be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes. 'And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules. Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue."

For a time, the warnings and the counsel of Daniel impressed Nebuchadnezzar, but eventually, arrogance, pride and self-glorification got the better of him.

One year later..... Nebuchadnezzar was wandering around the top of his royal residence admiring all the beauty that surrounded him, congratulating himself on his mighty works and basking in his own glory and majesty. The words had barely left his lips when a voice came from heaven:

"This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes."

Immediately the dream was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar was banished from court and ate grass like a cow. His hair grew long and matted and his fingernails grew like eagle's talons.

At the end of the "7 times" Nebuchadnezzar's mind and kingdom were restored to him and this is what he said,

"I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward 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. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth. No one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?' At that time my reason returned to me and my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, exalt, and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

- **Ellen White {PK 521}**: The once proud monarch had become a humble child of God; the tyrannical, overbearing ruler, a wise and compassionate king. He, who had defied and blasphemed the God of heaven, now acknowledged the power of the Most High and earnestly sought to promote the fear of Jehovah and the happiness of his subjects. Under the rebuke of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, Nebuchadnezzar had learned at last the lesson which all rulers need to learn -- that true greatness consists in true goodness. He acknowledged Jehovah as the living God... God's purpose that the greatest kingdom in the world should show forth His praise was now fulfilled. This public proclamation, in which Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the mercy and goodness and authority of God, was the last act of his life recorded in sacred history.

The king that God had pursued for so long finally got it!! Ah, the joy in heaven!!

What do we do with this story?

Nebuchadnezzar's story is so much more than transformation. It is really about God's unrelenting pursuit of the human heart and the transformed life that comes as a result of that pursuit.

God is relentless in His pursuit of lost people. He is willing to do whatever it takes.