

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

SESSION 5

Book of Daniel: Daniel Chapter 4 - **PARTICIPANT GUIDE**

WELCOME

Last week, we saw how Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah stood firm in their resolve and conviction to worship God. They did not bow to King Neb's image. They did not worship the gods publicly and the God of the Universe privately. And because of their faith, God rescued them from the fiery furnace.

This week, **Daniel 4** provides the most unique perspective to any we have seen yet in the whole story of Daniel. It unveils a pivotal chapter in the life of King Nebuchadnezzar – the mighty ruler of Babylon. This chapter offers reflective insights into the nature of power, humility, and God's divine sovereignty. This chapter helps us to understand God's mercy, His invitation of repentance & redemption, as well as the limitations of a powerful earthly king.

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Daniel 4:1-3**

QUESTIONS

What stands out to you guys about the first 3 verses?

Does this sound like the ol'Neb we're used to?

- **What's different?**

What clues do we have in the first 3 verses to show us that Neb's worship is genuine?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Daniel 4:4-18**

King Neb seems to be the writing an intro to his biography OR he's the on-site reporter "just reporting the news," in the book of Daniel. Really, this seems so strange based on all that we had read in the first **3 chapters**.

But guys, this is what God does to people – even evil dictators – when He grabs a hold of their lives. He completely transforms them into something completely unrecognizable. This chapter is his testimony of how God changed his heart.

And for Neb, it all starts again with a _____. And again, he brings the conga line of professionals to interpret his dream. But this time it's different. This time King Neb tells them the content of the dream. He doesn't play games like he did in **chapter 2**. But the result is the same – they still can't interpret the dream.

And then Daniel [Belteshazzar] arrives. King Neb tells him the dream, and Neb has _____ – through all of the fluff – that his dream will be interpreted.

QUESTIONS

Why do you think God gave a dream to Nebuchadnezzar telling him what he was going to do? What does this tell you about God?

Has God ever “troubled your heart” to get your attention? If so, how did you respond?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Daniel 4:19-27**

Through everything that has happened up until this point, we get a brief insight into the relationship of Daniel and King Neb. Despite their backgrounds and their circumstances, there seems to be a mutual respect between them – almost like grandfather to grandson.

When Daniel heard the dream, Scripture states that he was, “dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him.” [If there was no respect for King Neb, then why would Daniel be dismayed.] Apparently the alarm was written all over his face because King Neb responded with, “Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you.” Maybe I’m wrong, but it seems that Daniel genuinely cared for Nebuchadnezzar and was clearly affected by the meaning of the dream. Even to the point in **verse 27**, when Daniel pleads with Neb to “break off” his sins and iniquities.

The right reaction to the threat of judgment is a humble _____ – to practice _____ and to show _____ to the oppressed. Unfortunately – and as we will soon find out – Nebuchadnezzar did not do either of these.

QUESTIONS

Daniel reveals a compassionate side to Neb, even though he has to deliver bad news. Why is speaking the truth in love so hard?

- *How does Daniel model this act of grace?*

In verse 25, Daniel tells King Neb that he will endure all of this punishment until he acknowledges that “the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.”

- *What would it mean for Neb to be humble?*
- *What would be the signs that he was humbled?*

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Daniel 4:28-33**

You know – and as most people find – God is merciful. God did not enact the consequences on King Neb immediately. God waited 1 year. Think about that for a moment. King Neb saw the concern on Daniel’s face, and heard Daniel’s pleas for Neb to repent. You can almost see Daniel – for 12 months – praying for King Neb and reminding him of God’s judgment that was pending.

Neb had received his warning – and after 12 months – there was no remedy. As he was walking on the roof of his kingdom – at the _____ point of his kingdom – praising and glorifying himself, God’s voice came _____ to Neb.

God told him that his kingdom would be taken from him, and that his new home would be “with the beasts of the field.” **Verse 33** states that “immediately” the word [of God] was fulfilled against Neb – no more warnings. He was driven from men and he became like a beast in the field.

QUESTIONS

In verse 28-30, we see that Neb was impressed with himself and that he was proud of all that “he” had accomplished. What do you define in your heart as “making it” or “success”?

- *Have you achieved this at any point in your life?*

In verse 29, we read that 12 months passed before God brought His judgment on Neb. What does this teach us about God and His ways?

In his punishment, Neb truly became like a beast of the field. Do you think this was an appropriate punishment for Neb’s pride?

What do you think God is showing Neb in making him like a beast of the field?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Daniel 4:34-37**

In **verse 32**, we read that God told Neb that he would remain as a beast for “seven periods of time.” We have no explanation of exactly how long that is – but in **verse 34** we see that the seven periods are over. For the first time, Neb lifted his eyes toward heaven – not to look at his kingdom or a statue he built or to admire himself – to see God. In doing so, he praised and honored the God of the universe.

In the end, God both humbled and restored Nebuchadnezzar. The goal wasn’t to bring him _____, but to bring him to his proper place before God and among men. King Neb now knew and honored God as Sovereign. And as a result, King Neb praises God in **verse 37**.

QUESTIONS

What stands out to you most in this story or about King Nebuchadnezzar?

What does Neb mean when he says in **verse 34 that he “lifted his eyes to heaven?”**

- *What immediately follows as a result of this action?*

Verse 36 tells us that Neb’s kingdom continued to flourish after he was restored back to the throne. Clearly, he has learned that the humble will be exalted.

- *What do you think is the primary lesson that Neb learned from this experience?*
- *Is this a lesson that we need to learn?*

What does this tell us about God that he would provide a way to restore Nebuchadnezzar back as king after he acknowledged God? What does it tell you about what God does in your life?

CONCLUSION

Daniel 4 serves as a reminder of God’s sovereignty and the importance of humility. Through God’s actions toward King Neb, we learn that pride leads to downfall, but humility leads to restoration. After God’s appointed time, Neb humbled himself before God, and he was restored to his kingdom and his senses. His testimony echoes throughout history, encouraging us to acknowledge the supremacy of God and to approach Him with reverence and humility in all aspects of our lives.

Outline for how we will study Daniel:

- **April 21st: Daniel 5: The Handwriting on the Wall**
- **April 28th: Daniel 6: Daniel in the Lion’s Den**