

Daniel 4:

Nebuchadnezzar's personal testimony – told in the classic structure of the genre.

1. What was life like before conversion (scant detail)
2. How did the conversion take place (in great detail)
3. What is life like now that you are converted (in some detail)

This is the story of each of our lives - But only we know at what place in the story we are currently at.

Verse 1:

Hints of a changed Nebuchadnezzar come from the very first verse:

“Peace be multiplied unto you?” We finally see a smiling Nebuchadnezzar

- Not the king besieging Jerusalem in Chapter 1,
- Not the king wanting to cut his wise man in pieces in Chapter 2,
- Not the king wanting to throw people in a fiery furnace in Chapter 3.

Verse 4:

At the start of the story Nebuchadnezzar is **“at rest in his house and flourishing in his palace.”**

King Nebuchadnezzar had been king for 40 years, he had just conquered Egypt and was the king of the world. He probably felt justified in moving into retirement.

Dangerous place to be –

- **Moses was flourishing in the courts of Egypt when he murdered a man**
- **King David was at rest in his house when he saw Bathsheba**
- **Solomon was flourishing when he allowed his lusts and appetites to turn him from God**
- **The sin of Sodom - Ezekial 16:49 “abundance of idleness”**

There is an epidemic of “affluenza” in the Western World today and it is producing the same outcome. Why are we acting the way Sodom and Gomorrah did? Because our circumstances are the same.

Verse 5:

Nebuchadnezzar has seen a lot in the 40 years of his reign.

He has been a man of war – he had been involved in campaigns against Assyria, Egypt, Judah, Phoenicia. But God knows how to get our attention.

Sometimes the comfort, stillness and quietness of our beds can be the scariest place around – because it is there that our thoughts and conscience has time to catch up with us

Verse 8:

Why do we tend to approach God last?

Repeated the wisemen are the first ones consulted:

- Daniel 2:2
- Daniel 3:8
- Daniel 4:7
- Daniel 5:7
- Daniel 6:7
- The prodigal son finds himself out of money and friends in a far country – and the first thing he does is attach himself to a citizen of that far country.
- Nebuchadnezzar has already experienced the foolishness of the wise man, and has had several opportunities to encounter God

Still he approaches him last.

Who are our wisemen? If we have a difficulty or a problem – who do we consult first?

Too often people today go to – psychics, astrologers, media, psychology, friend, colleague at work

But the one that we should be consulting first is God himself.

Verses 10-12

This was an apt symbol for Nebuchadnezzar himself, and the nation of Babylon

“In the midst of the earth” – New American Bible “a tree of great height in the centre of the world”

“Strong” – the strongest nation in all the world, the greatest general to that time

“Leaves were fair and the fruit much” – showing the prosperity of both Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon

“Meat for all” – the whole world was subject to the rulership and provision of the Babylonian empire

- the centre of economic might

“Beasts” found shadow – nations were protected by

- the centre of political and military might

“Fowls of the heaven” – spirits, usually evil spirits

- the centre of spiritual might.

Is there today a nation on the earth that is the:

- centre of economic might?
- centre of political and military might?
- centre of spiritual might?

If USA uses their might with pride, arrogance and for self-serving purposes, will God judge that in the same way that he judged Babylon?

Compare with Revelation 18.

In the dream, the tree is cut down.

Verse 23:

Jesus is ever merciful and provides plenty of opportunity -

Let me give you another example in scripture of opportunity repeated given with the symbolism of a cut down tree.

See Luke 3:7-8

The warning to Israel – Given six months before Jesus commenced His ministry.

You cannot just rely on your heritage to find favour with God.

You have to bring forth “fruits worthy of repentance” – there has to be a changed life.

Verse 9 - The axe is coming to this nation if it does not produce fruit – this is a warning.

Verse 10 – People ask, “OK, tells us what to do.”

Verse 11 – Look after those that are less fortunate – that shows that your priorities have changed from selfish to selfless.

Verse 12 – Publican ask, “OK, tells US what to do.”

Verse 13 – Only collect what you require

Verse 14 – Soldiers ask, OK, tell US what to do.”

- Be content with your wages.

Luke 13:6-9

They were warned 3 years ago by John the Baptist, now Jesus is reminding them, checking for the fruit.

Jesus has given the “fig tree” 3 years – he has been ministering 2 ½ years, and John the Baptist 6 months.

Jesus says “Just give me one more year” – He knew when he was going to die.

Matthew 21:19,20

– a year later the fig tree is still not bearing fruit

- **they have used up all the opportunity that has been given them.**

Having given chance, after chance, after chance – he had to leave the Israelite nation to their choice.

After giving Nebuchadnezzar chance, after chance, after chance – he had to leave him to his choice.

There are many opportunities afforded Nebuchadnezzar:

- Chapter 1 – sees the blessing of God in Daniel and his 3 friends
- Chapter 2 – sees the blessing of God in Daniels recounting and interpretation of the dream and acknowledges the wisdom of God in **Daniel 2:47**
- Chapter 3 – sees the blessing of God in the preservation of the three Hebrews, and acknowledges the wisdom of God in **Daniel 3:28,29**

Verse 27:

The same counsel as John the Baptist gives to the nation of Israel almost 600 years later. Look after the poor and be less self centred.

The clearest demonstration that your heart has changed from selfishness to selflessness is what you are doing for those that are less fortunate than you.

Verse 29-30:

Nebuchadnezzar is walking around admiring his own shadow.

Werner Keller in his 1980 book "The Bible As History" said:

"Hardly any other monarch in the past was such an assiduous builder. There is scarcely any mention of warlike activities, conquests and campaigns. In the forefront there is the constant building activity of Nebuchadnezzar. Hundreds of thousands of bricks bear his name, and the plans of many buildings have been preserved. Babylon, in fact, surpassed all the cities of the ancient orient: it was greater than Thebes, Memphis and Ur, greater even than Ninevah."

Nebuchadnezzar was a writer – we have his personal testimony recorded here, but archeologists have found many documents that he wrote – translated to English fill 126 pages, saying how great he was

- architect
- builder
- conquerer

This world seems to be divided into two groups:

1. Those that think too much of themselves – epidemic of egotistic arrogance
2. Those that think too little of themselves – epidemic of self-loathing depression

PROBLEM: We are focused on what others think of us rather than what God thinks of us.

It is hard to get that balance right.

Nebuchadnezzar had clearly not got it right.

God had said very clearly to him six months earlier that if he ever spoke like that again God would deal with him.

Verse 33:

Lycanthropic insanity - form of insanity in which person believes himself to be a wolf.

God did not want this to happen, but Nebuchadnezzar made his choice. God knew what was best for him.

"Sometimes to find yourself you have to be beside yourself." AMEN?

Verse 34:

There is hope for all.

It is marvelous that the power of God can humble the mighty as quickly as he can honour the humble.

In a day, Nebuchadnezzar was taken from king of the world to naked, ignorant, beast

In a day, Nebuchadnezzar was taken from an ignorant beast to the king of the world.

Nebuchadnezzar became a beast when he thought himself a god and looked down from the palace

Nebuchadnezzar became god like when he was a beast and looked up to heaven.

The more we look down on the things of earth the more beastly we'll become

The more we look toward heaven the more heavenly we'll become

Satan can also take us to a place in which we are acting much more like animals than reasonable human beings.

But this passage provides hope for whatever level of sin we have got ourselves involved in.

Verse 37:

These are the sentiments of a converted man.

In the **Review and Herald of Jan 11, 1906**, Ellen White said:

“King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to "praise and extol and honour the King of heaven"

Nebuchadnezzar has a changed testimony:

- Daniel 2:47 – “Your God”
- Daniel 3:28:29 – “The God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
- Daniel 4:37 – Nebuchadnezzar’s God.

We need to make God, our God. We cannot stand on the experience of someone else’s God

Our spouses God

Our friends God

Our church pastors God

Our 3ABN evangelists God

We have to make him our God.

The parable of the Foolish Virgins.

When startled from their lethargy, they discern their destitution, and entreat others to supply their lack; but in spiritual things no man can make up another's deficiency. Character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit's working. "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it [the land], as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." Eze. 14:20.

Christ Object Lesson 411-412

Nebuchadnezzar finally got his own experience, and we need to make sure that we have our own.

The true nature of Nebuchadnezzar's conversion is shown in the fact that he is willing to publish this account. We should be just as willing to give a testimony.

Nebuchadnezzar wasted 4 decades before finally coming to a recognition of the need for Jesus in his life, and to recognize that he had to take self off the throne.

If you have not made your decision for Jesus yet, I urge you to make it now.

I don't know how long he has been calling you to make that decision.

But I do know that he is calling you now to commit or recommit your life to him.