

Daniel

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 December 2017

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Daniel chapter 4 because this content is so striking and it is so filled with applications, some of which you made the last time when we spent some time here.

But it's been a break now and we've had a kind of a hiatus time-wise and I want to pick up on some review material. So let's look at Daniel chapter 4. Nebuchadnezzar, the king, to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth.

May your peace abound. It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me. How great are his signs and how mighty are his wonders.

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and his dominion is from generation to generation. Then Nebuchadnezzar is going to recount, or Daniel is going to recount through or from Nebuchadnezzar, this dream that he is having.

And it is very, very striking. And let me just give you a bit of a historical backdrop so we'll be able to picture the setting here. Remember that Daniel and his three friends are among thousands of Jews who have been taken captive from their native land, Israel, and brought all the way east to Babylon, which today is modern southern Iraq.

[1 : 34] And there they were put into service, some of them as servants, some of them in higher positions, like some of the intelligentsia of which Daniel was one, his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were likewise.

And they were put in positions of responsibility because they actually had risen to the top level of understanding and wisdom, and that was recognized by the Babylonians.

And they simply put them in positions of responsibility. And Daniel has already distinguished himself by interpreting not only the meaning of the dream, but telling Nebuchadnezzar what the dream was, which is absolutely unheard of.

And that demonstrated that Daniel was in touch with an infinitely wise God who actually knew, not only knew what Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed, but was the one who gave him the dream.

And Daniel comes to the rescue and is able to interpret not only what the dream meant, but what the dream actually was. And, fellas, that is absolutely, totally unheard of.

[2 : 50] I mean, it's like me coming to you and saying, I had the strangest dream last night. And you said, really, what was it? And I say, you tell me.

And you say, well, how in the world could I know what you dreamed? I mean, the possibilities are unlimited. Well, that's exactly the situation that Daniel was in.

And Daniel wasn't smart enough to figure out the dream either. But God, who gave the dream to Nebuchadnezzar, revealed to Daniel what it was, and it immediately propelled Daniel into a position of trust and responsibility that was virtually unparalleled.

Now, Nebuchadnezzar is having another dream. And let me point this out, too, guys, because this is really very, very important. We are dealing with humanity in a relatively infant stage.

Not as infant as Genesis, but still infantile insofar as humanity is concerned. So much so, that God is dealing with people through dreams and visions, which is characteristic of the Old Testament, going all the way back to Genesis, and actually coming up through into the New Testament.

[4 : 12] Because we find some dreams and visions there, like Peter and the sheep let down from heaven, etc. But that has greatly diminished with the completion of the canon of Scripture, which is just another way of saying that we have a complete Bible, we have a finished Bible.

God today is speaking primarily through His Word, through His written Word. Now, I probably ought to inject this because I don't know exactly what to do with it.

Excuse me. I don't know if you've been following too much what has been going on in the world of Islam.

But I keep hearing very authoritative, credible reports about Muslims having definitive dreams, and some have recorded even seeing visions regarding the person of Christ and His work of redemption.

And I'm not getting this from any other segment of society, but it seems to be occurring with too much frequency to be denied.

[5 : 39] And I don't know what to attribute it to, except to say it may. And I want to use this word may, because there isn't any way that we can tell.

It may point to the fact or the idea that we are closer to the end time than we know. Because one of the chief characteristics of eschatology, or the doctrine of last things, one of the chief characteristics of the last days, is that there is going to be a reversion of the supernatural in very obvious ways that we do not see now.

Now, as you read the revelation, it becomes very apparent that God is doing some very hands-on things.

We find the presence of angelic beings as major players in the revelation, all kinds of supernatural things occurring in the revelation, that are reminiscent of God doing things in a very open, obvious way.

And there's going to be increased activity of the supernatural from Satan himself. So, this conflict, this global conflict that is going on now, or universal conflict, is going to be intensified during the revelation period.

[7 : 17] And right now, we are dwelling in what is referred to as a parenthesis, or an interim period, whereby we do not see so much of the miraculous manifestation, as you saw in the Old Testament, in the book of Acts, and in the Gospels, because we walk by faith, not by sight.

That means that our major motivation for believing and doing comes from the written Word of God, rather than from direct revelation, as we often find in the Scriptures.

So, that's an important thing to keep in mind. And what we have here is a relatively primitive kind of expression of God revealing Himself to man, and then it is recorded here for our benefit.

Remember, Romans 10, for whatsoever things were written before time, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. So, here's Nebuchadnezzar and his dream, and we've already expressed a number of things regarding this guy, and one is he had a supersized ego.

If you know anything about Oriental despots and the way they ruled, they had a reputation for being brutal, for being decisive, for being autocratic, for being very, very, what shall I say, intense, these were the kind of people that would simply look to an assistant and point to somebody and say, off with his head, and he's done.

[9 : 02] That's it. Life is cheap, living under these kind of people. And Nebuchadnezzar was certainly one of the most brutal. But he's going to be tamed.

And the way he's going to be tamed is, Nebuchadnezzar is going to be broken. And let me just inject something here, because it's very, very important.

This brokenness, this spiritual brokenness, that is ultimately going to result in the salvation of this man. I fully expect to see Nebuchadnezzar in heaven.

I don't have any doubt about that. But from his behavior, prior to the time of his brokenness, you wouldn't expect to see him there. But this spiritual brokenness means that we must come to the end of ourselves for wisdom and knowledge and good works and all the rest of it.

We need to be spiritually broken. And this is true not only for unbelievers, but even for believers. Because there is a brokenness that takes place when someone comes to faith in Christ.

[10 : 29] And it is a recognition, an acknowledgement, of our own inadequacy, insufficiency, inability to do anything that will be pleasing to God.

And to have to admit that does a job on our ego. This is where a brokenness has to come in. Because, and men especially, guys, being one of you, I think that the male ego is something to behold.

And we like to think of ourselves as a can-do person. I can do it. I can make it. I can handle it. I can, you know. And that's, that's, that's the brokenness that we need to come to.

And it is not an easy thing. But when once we are broken, then we are available for God to do something. And that not only happens for unbelievers, but it happens for believers as well.

And I can attest to that because, personally, I experienced this brokenness thing back in the 1960s. And it completely changed everything, even though I was already a believer at the time.

[11:44] All right, let's get into this. I, Nebuchadnezzar, verse 4, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace. This is the good life and he had made.

I saw a dream and it made me fearful. And these fantasies, as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me.

So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon. These are the same guys that failed him before. Remember? In chapter 2, and Daniel came to the rescue and resulted in the salvation, or the saving, not the salvation, but in the sparing the lives of all of them.

The diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me. But finally, Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belshazzar.

That's the Babylonian name that they had given to Daniel. Daniel's God-given name was Daniel. But the Babylonians renamed him because that was part of the psychology and part of the brainwashing that you rename those whom you have captured and taken as your own, as your slaves.

[13:00] You rename them and it's part of the psychological breaking. Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belshazzar, according to the name of my God, that is, his deity, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods, and I related the dream to him.

Now, I want you to note that there is a difference here in the name of my God. That would be the deity of the Babylonians. And Nebuchadnezzar is making a distinction between his God and the one in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.

And you see here that is pluralized. Plural. And that's simply because Nebuchadnezzar doesn't know any better. At this point in time, he is not aware of the fact that there is but one true God. And the Jewish people had an understanding of that. In fact, they were likely the only ones at that time that did. They were fiercely monotheistic.

But, they had also fallen into polytheism, the worship of many gods. And that's the principal reason why God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to come against them, destroy Jerusalem, take the people captive, and bring them to Babylon.

[14:26] It's because they had turned their back on their monotheistic God, Jehovah. And they are now in God's divine woodshed.

He is going to give them a 70-year spanking. And then allow them to return to their land. And when they do, they are going to return as a people who have been cured of idolatry.

And this is what it took. So, in verse 9, O Belshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that in the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery baffles you, tell me the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation.

Now, he's asking for a replay. He's asking Daniel to do what he had done before. when he gave Nebuchadnezzar a picture of what he dreamed with that incredible image, and then interpreted the dream and the meaning for it.

So, Daniel has already got a track record established. He's already got the confidence of Nebuchadnezzar, and he calls him in. And in verse 10, these were the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed.

[15:55] I was looking, and behold, there was a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew large and became strong, and its height reached to the sky, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth.

Its foliage was 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 sky dwelt in its branches, and all living creatures fed themselves from it.

I was looking in the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed, and behold, an angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven.

He shouted out and spoke as follows, Chop down the tree, cut off its branches, strip off its foliage, and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it, and the birds from the branches.

Yet, leave the stump with its roots in the ground. That's very, very significant. Leaving the stump with its roots in the ground suggests there's going to be a comeback.

[17:06] This is not final. It is temporary. There is going to be a resurgence of that which was cut down. That's the whole point of leaving the stump and the 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. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him, you see the personal, the pronoun here, him, and let him share with the beast in the grass of the earth, let his, mind be changed from that of a man, so it is suggesting that in this dream, the he and the his is referring to a man, a human being.

Of course, it's going to be Nebuchadnezzar. And let a beast's mind be given to him. What would it be like to lose your mind as a human being and take on the mind, the equivalent of an animal. It's unthinkable. We just can't imagine anything like that. And let seven periods of time pass over him. This is seven years, not weeks or months, seven years.

This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers. In other words, the angel is delivering this, much like angels delivered the message to Zacharias and to Mary regarding the birth of Jesus.

[18 : 45] And the decision is a command of the holy ones in order that the living may know that the most high is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whom he wishes and sets over it the lowliest of men.

This is the dream which I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belshazzar, Daniel, tell me its interpretation. Inasmuch as none of the wise men in my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.

Apparently, Nebuchadnezzar didn't know how else to describe the god of Daniel, and he pluralizes it. And Daniel, whose name is Belshazzar, was appalled for a while, as his thoughts alarmed him.

The king responded and said, Belshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.

Belshazzar answered and said, My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries.

Mark? Yes. It's interesting to note that this time Belshazzar told the dream that he had before he made Daniel tell him what the dream was. Yeah. And by doing that, he needed Daniel, and it was probably going to give him the proper interpretation of it.

[20 : 07] Because here, since he told the dream, Daniel could have come up with any interpretation he wanted to. He knew there would have no difference. But he trusted him because he knew what the one was before. So this time he didn't make Daniel tell him what the vision was.

He just burned it out and told him. Yeah. And Daniel had already established himself with credibility. And the king just had complete confidence in him because of that.

And Daniel goes on to say, you know, I wish this dream that you had applied only to your enemies. But it doesn't. And the sad news that I have to tell you, your majesty, is that you are the subject of this dream.

Verse 20. 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 whose branches the birds of the sky lost.

[21 : 14] 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.

Babylon, at this time, guys, Babylon was the superpower. There were no competitors for ruling. They ruled what was then referred to as the known world. This is the whole Mediterranean basin. They were the only superpower, and they were entrenched in power, and Nebuchadnezzar, of course, was the head of the whole thing, which was tremendously prestigious and ego-building and uplifting, and he got all kinds of recognition and accolades and all the rest of it.

And in that, verse 23, the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descend from heaven and say, 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.

[22 : 42] This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, that is the one true God, which has come upon my lord the king, that you, Nebuchadnezzar, 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.

this is the brokenness of which we spoke earlier. Nebuchadnezzar is in for a breaking down, and listen, the fact that it is going to go on for seven years indicates to me how stubborn the human ego and will can be.

I don't pretend to understand the goings-on that were taking place in the mind, the psyche, the brain of Nebuchadnezzar during this time, but I know God is going to subject him to this animal-like behavior, so that eventually, after seven years, he will come to recognize that Nebuchadnezzar is really not such hot stuff, after all.

He is not in charge. He is subject to the one who is in charge, and this brokenness is essential. And someone has said, God cannot use anyone until he breaks them first.

and our ego, our will, our volition will get in the way because we all like to run the show.

[25 : 07] We like to be in charge of me. I'm the boss of me. I determine what I'm going to do. It is my will.

And God has given us volition. He's given us the ability to make choices. And sometimes we get carried away with it and we think that we are the ruler of ourselves.

And we are hot stuff. And it is this kind of brokenness that is really needed. You could even equate it, I don't mean to reduce man to an animal-like state, but after all, between vegetable and mineral and animal, we are animal of the three.

And just like an animal, like a horse, a wild horse, it needs to be broken before it can be of any service to mankind.

And it is a lesson that the horse has to learn that the horse is not in charge of the horse. That the man who is breaking it is going to be superior to the horse and that eventually the horse is going to have to bend its will, break its will to the will of the man who is breaking it.

[26 : 30] And there is an analogy there, guys, that we can be the same way. Did I see a hand? Yeah. It sounds like God's boot camp. I'm sorry? It sounds like God's boot camp.

Yeah, well, you're right. It is that kind of a thing. And you know, the breaking, fellas, the breaking is never pleasant. No way it's pleasant. It's painful.

It might even be humiliating and embarrassing. But it is something that we all need to come to before we're actually worth anything to God.

And it is a high price to pay, but it is a sweet price to pay that yields the peaceable fruits of, well, when the writer wrote Hebrews, he said, no chastening, no chastening at the present is joyous. Chastening means child training. It means taking you to the woodshed. It means daddy's going to spank you. And the writer of Hebrews says, no chastening is joyous, but afterwards it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.

[27 : 49] And that's a kind of brokenness that we're talking about here. And what it literally means is you are not in charge. And as long as you think you are, you are unbroken.

And the brokenness is something that we all need. brokenness because when we experience brokenness under the hand of God, then we turn into something and someone that is usable to God.

Because then God's will, when we are broken, God's will becomes our will. And the only person who was ever born, who ever came into this world already broken, was our Lord Jesus Christ. And that was exemplified all throughout his ministry, and it was punctuated by that expression in the Garden of Gethsemane with nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.

all that was, was a confirmation of the brokenness of the Son to the will of the Father. And he was that way from the very beginning.

[29 : 06] So, continuing on, in verse 27, Therefore, O King, may my advice be pleasing to you, break away now, break away now, from your sins, by doing righteousness, and from your iniquities, by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.

And Nebuchadnezzar is saying, no way. No way. Actually, it appears that Nebuchadnezzar is given an out.

Will he take it? Fellas, this is another illustration of, and I'm reluctant to use the word, but you know what I mean because of its effect.

This is an illustration of the magic of repentance. God's silver bullet is repentance.

The change of mind, which is exactly what repentance means, it doesn't mean to cry tears, it doesn't mean to make promises, it just means to change your mind. It means to reverse yourself.

[30 : 28] And Nebuchadnezzar is given that opportunity and he is not about to take it because let me tell you, when someone is endowed with power, political power, military power, organizational power, whatever the power is, it is so difficult to relinquish that and to give it up.

And we've got squabbles going on in Washington, D.C. all the time. I mean, 24-7, 12 months out of the year, between the Republicans and the Democrats.

and what's it all about? It's all about power. That's exactly what it's all about. It's about power. Who is going to be in a position to make the call, set the agenda, and have their will, rather than the other guy's will, be done.

That's the name of the game, and it's called politics. And it's just one more expression of what's going on. Well, all this happened, verse 28, to Nebuchadnezzar the king, 12 months later.

12 months, actually, it looks like, it looks to me like, God is giving him a year to come around. And during this year, he's thinking about the dream, he's thinking about, well, nothing has happened yet.

[32 : 00] You know, he's still cock of the walk. He's still ruling the roost. He's still calling the shots. He's still giving the orders, and people are still carrying them out. And this has gone on for a whole year, and nothing has happened yet.

And, he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. Verse 29, says he was walking. Maybe that's all he was doing was walking. But you know, characteristic of Nebuchadnezzar, you know what I think he was doing? I think he was strutting. He was strutting. He was so proud of himself.

Walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, the king reflected and said, is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty.

You see this? My, my, me, myself, I, and mine. That's all an egocentric person can think about. After me, you come first.

[33 : 18] After me, you come first. Three most important people in the world. I, myself, and me. And, hey, fellas, that is systemic to human nature.

That's the way we're built. That's the result of the fall. And as I pointed out to you before, the most powerful consequence that has settled in on humanity as a result of the fall is self-centeredness.

It's a curse that every one of us has been cursed with. And the only response to that is the brokenness of which we have been speaking. And while the word, verse 31, while the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven saying, King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared sovereignty, it is declared sovereignty has been removed from you.

In other words, Nebuchadnezzar, you're fired. He's out of a job. And it's going to be down, down, down.

And all he is used to is up, up, up. But he's going to be brought down. to the level of an animal. And breakfast is here, and we'll continue this in the next session.

[34 : 42] Any comments or questions before we... Yeah, Dan. These interpreters, were they told to dream before the interpretation comes?

I don't know. I don't know. We aren't given specific information about that. Because they were put in an untenable position. If they had the dream wrong, I think that was it.

Well, yeah, it could be... I mean, that's kind of a cultural question, but I mean... Yeah. If you displease the king in any way, that could definitely be hazardous to your health.

Yeah. You can bet if they were going to interpret that dream, they would have come out with something very positing about it for the king. Oh, yeah. Yeah. He would have liked it. Make him look good. Absolutely.

Absolutely. Mark, tell the king what he wants to hear. I mean... Can I share something? Sure. It tries directly what you're talking about about man's pride. I had so much pride about my low heartbeat.

[35 : 40] You know, I've been physical and athletic person and my heartbeat was 37, 38 and I was so proud of that. But each time we'll go to a doctor, they'd say, Joe, you know, your heartbeat's a little low, we ought to take a little more looking. No, no, no, it's been that way all the time.

It's been my way, I'm good. I like that low heartbeat, you know, because I'm physical, you know, I got a lot of heartbeats. So, okay, finding my heartbeat got down to 22, guys. 22 at rest is a low heartbeat.

I mean, you're not alive much more if you're going low in that. That concerned me a little bit. You know, I thought about that. So I went to the heart doctor and he says, you've got to have a

pacemaker right away.

This happened to me about three or four weeks ago, guys. I didn't tell you about it. Nobody knew about it. Three or four weeks ago, he said, you've got a heart pacemaker put in. You know, here's going to last too long.

I said, well, let's do it. Let's do it. He said, well, the earliest schedule I can do it is about a week from now. A week from now, I've got a room to put you in there. And I thought, well, okay, I guess I'll live this long with a little heartbeat.

[36 : 38] So I guess I can live another week. Okay, Russell testified to this. And it was Thursday morning. I told Russell about this. I told you about this. And I said, I've got to keep my heart beating, so I'm going to take a bike trip.

So I had a bike trip planned. I was taking a bike trip. Russell could testify to this. And what do you do? I order big breakfast. I had french toast and eggs and everything I was going to eat. And so I'm like a kid that was taught you always swing at your plate.

And so I always eat my peanut plate because I was taking this long bike ride. And so I got to have all this energy. So I got every reason to eat that meal. But for some reason that morning folks, I could not eat that food.

Russell testified. I mean, I all the time, I nibble and I just can't eat that. I don't know when I'm not hungry. When I got started that morning on my trip, my wife called me on the phone and says, Joe, they tell you they want you in the hospital right away.

They want to operate right away. Only one thing, if you ate a breakfast, they can't operate. If you ate a breakfast, they can't operate. So I thought, no, I didn't eat it.

[37 : 44] I didn't eat it. Okay, Karen, come get me. Take me to the hospital. She took me to the hospital. And I had my transplant in there. And I can tell you experience about that too. But the next morning, here's another sign that I gave me.

Next morning, I wanted to check my heartbeat at home. They kept me overnight and went home. It's actually a fairly minor operation to put a patient there. Great. Roger knows.

So I went home and I checked my heartbeat. I wanted to check my heartbeat with one of those wrist things. And it also tells you your heartbeat. See, it's blood pressure.

It's one of those wrist things that shows your blood pressure. So I read my blood pressure. Right off, guess what it was? 120 over 80. I've never had what they consider the perfect blood pressure.

That's the perfect blood pressure. 120 over 80. That's God saying, man, I got you fixed up now. You're doing the right, I got you. You're taken care of. I mean, that was, I was touching God like that. I mean, he was right here.

[38 : 44] With the events, and it just happened in my life. I mean, it was, it was fantastic. And so, when I was laying on the operating table, they keep you a lot. They keep you, they don't put you out.

They just sensitize the area they're working on. And when I'm laying there, and all of a sudden I get this feeling like this. wow. Wow, man. Like a high.

Oh, man, yeah, exactly. Oh, did I feel good. Wow. Wow. And I said, I'll bet you turned that thing on, didn't you? And the representative, the company was there to help the doctor set the thing up.

He was there, and he said, yeah, we turned it on. And it was an oxygen fix. I mean, I was going from 22 beats to 60 beats a minute. 60 beats a minute, laying there doing nothing, and all of a sudden, you're getting so much oxygen.

You know, normally when you're exercising, your body's heartbeats faster than you get oxygen. That goes along with the increased need, energy need. But I wasn't doing anything but laying there and rested, but my heartbeat went from then, it was about 28 up to 60.

[39 : 48] And boy, talk about feeling good. The rush of oxygen. Oh, it was like an oxygen fix. That's what it was. I mean, that's it. I just had to share that when you were talking about it. I appreciate it.

It really fit in. Thank you, Joe. Thank you. I appreciate that.