

THE PROPHETIC WORD TODAY

Daniel: Until You Know

Text: Daniel 4

INTRODUCTION: When I was in 7th grade I took a woodworking shop. All of us guys had been eager to take it. They had some neat tools in there, a lot better than dad's. But our shop teacher had a rule. Nobody touches the tools or begins a project until they could pass a test on how to calculate the board feet of a woodworking project.

Now it really was not that hard. The definition of a board foot is rather simple--**one board foot is a piece of lumber that is 1 foot wide, 1 foot long and 1 inch thick, ...**

144 cubic inches

Once you learned what it was, the problems were really easy.

But for guys, ...many of whom were not the sharpest knives in the drawer, this proved to be tough. Every day, the teacher explained it. He worked some sample problems. He gave a test. Those who passed went into the shop to begin working with wood the next day. Those who did not stayed until they knew. Some stayed for weeks. One guy, the whole semester. But you don't go in the shop until you know what a board foot is.

In the early chapters of Daniel, God is the teacher, and King Nebuchadnezzar is the student. And God said to His student, "You are not going to get out of this class until you know something."

Chapter 4 – a letter or official document written by Nebuchadnezzar himself, in Aramaic.

Dan. 4:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:Peace be multiplied to you.

This is Nebuchadnezzar's testimony of how he learned what he had to know. And you know what? What Nebuchadnezzar had to know, you and I have to know. In fact, you cannot get to heaven until you know. So let's examine Nebuchadnezzar's testimony.

Dan. 4:2 I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.

I. THE MEDIUM: A DREAM

Dan. 4:4-6,8 ⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. ⁵ I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. ⁶ Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream....⁸ But at last Daniel came before me (his name *is* Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him *is* the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, *saying*:

A. All was well, seemingly. At ease and prospering.

- B. Terrifying dream.
 1. Called for wise. Unsuccessful.
 2. Finally called Daniel. Spirit of Holy Spirit of God on him

C. Description:

Dan. 4:10-17 “These *were* the visions of my head *while* on my bed: I was looking, and behold, A tree in the midst of the earth, And its height was great. ¹¹ The tree grew and became strong; Its height reached to the heavens, And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth. ¹² Its leaves *were* lovely, Its fruit abundant, And in it *was* food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, And all flesh was fed from it.

¹³ “I saw in the visions of my head *while* on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. ¹⁴ He cried aloud and said thus:

‘Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, And the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, *Bound* with a band of iron and bronze, In the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, And *let* him graze with the beasts On the grass of the earth. ¹⁶ Let his heart be changed from *that of* a man, Let him be given the heart of a beast, And let seven times pass over him. ¹⁷ ‘ This decision *is* by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.’

A Giant Tree

1. Beasts and birds, food
2. Watcher – a holy one
3. Hew the tree
4. Leave stump
 - a. Let Him
 - 1) Be wet
 - 2) Be with beast
 - 3) Mind – heart like beast
 - 4) 7 times
 - 5) Purpose – that he may know that God rules!

II. THE MEANING: INTERPRETATION

A. Daniel’s interpretation

Dan. 4:20-23 “The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which *could be seen* by all the earth, ²¹ whose leaves *were* lovely and its fruit abundant, in which *was* food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home— ²² it *is* you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the

heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth. ²³ “And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree ...

Dan. 4:24-25 ²⁴ this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: ²⁵ They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

Decree of the Most High

1. **Driven from men**
2. **Dwell as a beast**
3. **Eat grass**
4. **Wet with dew**
5. **7 years**
6. **Until you know that God rules!**

Counsel: Repent by practicing righteousness. Show mercy.

Dan. 4:27 Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by *being* righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to *the* poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.”

B. The Fulfillment

1. 1 year later

Dan. 4:29-30 ²⁹ At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. ³⁰ The king spoke, saying, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?”

2. Voice from heaven

Dan. 4:31 While the word *was still* in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!

3. It happened

Dan. 4:33 That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles’ *feathers* and his nails like birds’ *claws*.

4. After 7 years

Dan. 4:34-36 ³⁴ And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding 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 *is* from generation to generation. ³⁵ All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

³⁶ At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me.

III. THE MESSAGE

A. To Nebuchadnezzar

Dan. 4:37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works *are* truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

Dan. 4:3 How great *are* His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion *is* from generation to generation.

Conversion experience

B. What did Nebuchadnezzar have to know?

1. **Everything eternal comes by the grace of God.**
2. **Everything eternal comes by the power of God.**

**Never by the merits of men.
Never by the power of men.**

This is the everlasting message of the Scriptures and of the Gospel.

This is true of salvation.

Eph 2:8-9 ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. – **by grace**

2 Cor 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. – **by God's power**

This is true of Christian living.

John 15:5 I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. – **by grace**

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." – **by God's power**

These same truths are pictured in the Lord's Supper.
The elements of bread and the fruit of the vine picture God's provision by grace.
The act of eating those elements pictures our receiving the Lord into our lives and then being empowered by the indwelling Spirit.