

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

## BOOK OF DANIEL

### THE TREE (DANIEL 4:19-22)

#### DANIEL SENSED TROUBLE FOR THE KING

We can imagine Daniel closing his eyes and quietly asking God for clarity and then being “stunned” and “alarmed” by what God showed him

- We start to see the love Neby and Daniel have for each other as Neby tries to comfort Daniel in his troubled state

### I WISH THIS WAS FOR SOMEONE ELSE (V19)

When Daniel says, “may the dream apply to those that hate you” he is expressing genuine desire that this prophecy not come to fruition for Neby

- This was not political flattery, but a deep love that Daniel had for his king. **We must also learn to love people of opposing ideologies like this!**

### THE INTERPRETATION IS BLATANTLY PUT OUT TO NEBY; THAT TREE IS YOU!

The powerful, beautiful tree that housed and provided for all creatures was to be cut down and all its fruit scattered. Daniel reminds him how much God entrusted him with. His dominion extended all over the world, and his power was unmatched.

### TRUE LOVE REQUIRES HONESTY (2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17)

Do we love people enough to call them out, pull them up, and to walk with them through their growth?

- Are we honest with good intentions and with tact and love? Pure love has honesty as an ingredient.

### CUT DOWN (DANIEL 4:23-27)

#### MEETING THE UNCONQUERABLE (V24)

This decree is “against my lord the king” implying that God will humble the man that had conquered everyone else in his path

#### ALL WOULD BE TAKEN AWAY

The destroyed tree (Neby) would have his branches stripped, his fruit scattered, all that lived under his protection would disperse, and he would lose his mind

#### THE GOAL OF THE PUNISHMENT WAS CLEAR

Neby would suffer for 7 years until he acknowledged that the “Most High is ruler over the kingdoms of men, and that He gives to them what He wants.”

- We might call this **conditional punishment**. God chose grace over vengeance, because before the insanity came, Neby knew it would end.

#### NOW, ABOUT THE REMAINING STUMP

Normally, a king would lose his kingdom by rivals within or a foreign army if he went insane, but God promised Neby he would return with his kingdom restored.

- **The promise is conditional** like the punishment. He would be restored only after he acknowledged “Heaven rules”

#### CONDITIONAL REDEMPTION?

Daniel 4:26 is reminiscent of Romans 10:9, another conditional promise. “If you confess with your mouth ‘Jesus is Lord’ and believe in your heart...you will be saved”

- Works do not save us, but salvation is conditional in the fact that **if we accept Him, then His grace saves us**. Then, works will come natural

#### DANIEL'S MESSAGE FROM GOD WAS OVER, NOW THE RECIPIENT HAS A CHANCE TO RESPOND

v27 lays it out. “Separate yourself from your sins and do what is right, and from your injustices by showing mercy to the needy.”

#### PERHAPS THERE WILL BE AN EXTENSION...

Daniel emphasizes grace even when he is explaining God's judgment.

- God is extremely unfair. If He were fair, we would all be damned, but if we turn from our path (repent), He's quick to show grace. But, **God foresaw** Neby's future, **so he was predestined** to be punished.

If we accept what He has done and make Him Lord, then His grace, not our works, saves us. Repentance is more than forgiveness, it is a lifestyle change. Do we have the guts and love to look people in the eyes and tell them they must turn around?

#### SENTENCING (DANIEL 4:28-33)

#### WALKING OUT UNCONVERTED

Though he respected the prophet and listened politely, Neby essentially said “This gospel is not for me. I don't believe in a God that would punish people who don't follow His commands or listen to His word.”

- One of the greatest stumbling blocks we have with Christ is that **He is not only love, but wrath against injustice**.

### SO, GOD GAVE HIM A YEAR TO CHANGE

God was gracious to give him time to repent, but the time was probably spent in admiration of his own achievements. Neby was brilliant and had created hanging gardens, a beautiful palace, high walkways, and monuments all over Babylon

#### PRIDE AS THE GREATEST SIN

Lewis said the “greatest sin is pride, because it leads to all other sins”. In Neby's eyes, Babylon was “built by my vast power to be a royal residence and to display my majestic glory.” **Personal pride that locks God out of our achievements leads us into spiritual ruin.**

#### WHILE THE WORDS WERE IN HIS MOUTH...

Daniel used a gripping phrase to show the instant judgment of God. As, Neby was bragging, God speaks to him and instantly converts him to an animalistic insanity.

- He was “driven away” from his people, possibly to a confined piece of land so Daniel could keep track of him

#### DANIEL PROBABLY TOOK OVER

It makes sense that he would lead Babylon until the 7 years had passed. He was most capable, knew the timeline, and would give the kingdom back to Neby

#### THE THESIS RESTATED

v32b again shows us the point of this event, and The Book of Daniel as a whole: God is ruler over the kingdoms of men, and He gives it to anyone He wants.

- Sovereignty is displayed quickly as Neby became like a repulsive animal

How often does God vie for our attention, trying to get us to turn around? Have we become so arrogant, complacent, entitled, distracted, or misled to the signs of God that we abuse His grace?

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT (DANIEL 4:34-37)

#### BUT IN THE END OF THOSE DAYS...

As the letter concludes, it seems cinematic in how right as the 7 year sentence is ending, Nebuchadnezzar raises his eyes towards heaven and his sanity returns

- The 3rd person narrative ends, and now Neby speaks for himself again. **God had healed his mind, and his first use is praise!**

#### REMEMBERING OUR REDEMPTION

In our lives we tend to ask for forgiveness and beg for provision, but we spend little time simply praising the God that redeemed us back from evil and destruction!

- Here we see **the only response to a converted heart and mind is the praise of the only One that can change the heart and mind!**

#### A PRAYER WORTH PLAGIARIZING

Neby's response in v34b-35 is solid enough to be recited by even the most learned theologians. We see that he has been humbled and has acknowledged and praised the power and awe of God.

#### WHY ALL THE SUFFERING AND INJUSTICE?

In God's wisdom He permits sin for a time, knowing that **He will bring it to judgment in the day of His wrath and that in the meantime, sin will not exceed the bounds He has fixed**. From our perspective, many things work against the sovereignty of God, but this is not the case.

#### A GENEROUS GOD

After 7 years, Neby's council and advisors sought him out and reestablished him as king. His “majesty” and “splendor” returned to him even greater than before

#### IF THE KINGDOM IS THE FOCUS, WE WILL HAVE A TEAM MENTALITY IN ADVANCING IT

This chapter teaches us a lesson about turf-guarding and defensiveness. Like Daniel, we are to trust that **God gives us what we need to control when we need it, and will give us peace about distributing authority to others**.

#### OUR IDENTITY CRISIS

- When we don't know who we are...
- We become control freaks -We allow ourselves to be defined by our circumstances
- We try to find purpose and value in gender, sex, race, wealth, and achievements
- We will never find contentment

#### OUR REPENTANCE CRISIS

- We have been sold a lie. There is no relationship with God without a genuine admittance that we need forgiveness and a change of direction. Come as you are, but don't leave the same.
- Repentance is a lifestyle, not just an event. We are always checking our alignment.
- **If we turn around and repent, we don't just find God, we find ourselves as well.**