

DIAMONDS FROM DANIEL

by

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONVERSION OF A KING

The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar

The tree in the midst of the earth

The Key

“It is thou, O king” (Daniel 4:22).

THE VISION (4:10-17)

THE INTERPRETATION (4:18-37)

“Behold a tree”

Nebuchadnezzar

“In the midst of the earth”

World empire of Babylon under
Nebuchadnezzar

“The height thereof was great”

The greatness, grandeur and glory
of Nebuchadnezzar and his empire

“The tree grew and was strong”

**“It is thou, O King, that art grown
and become strong”**

**“The sight thereof to the end of all the
earth”**

The universal world empire of
Babylon

“The leaves thereof were fair”

Handsome men and beautiful women

“The fruit thereof much”

The children of Nebuchadnezzar. Princes and
Princesses

“In it was meat for all”

Self contained and independent. Like the
U.S.A. rather than like England which is
dependent upon others for national sustenance.

**“The beasts of the field had shadow under
it”**

Man and beast protected and preserved.

“All flesh was fed on it”	Worldwide trade and commerce
“Behold a watcher”	A holy unfallen angel
“An holy one”	Another holy unfallen spirit intelligence of a different order and office
“Hew down the tree”	The ruin of Nebuchadnezzar
“Cut off his branches”	Dominions and dependencies
“Shake off his leaves”	Loss of his subjects
“Scatter his fruit”	His children
“Let the beasts get away and the fowls”	Protection gone
“Nevertheless leave the stump”	Neither Nebuchadnezzar nor his kingdom were to be utterly ruined or completely destroyed
“Even with a band of iron and brass”	The kingdom was to be left and preserved unto him after judgment had done its work.
“Let it be wet with the dew of heaven”	Nebuchadnezzar to be homeless and Shelterless
“Let his portion be with the beasts”	Reason was to take wings, fly away and leave him as an irrational, senseless, irresponsible beast.
“Let a beast’s heart be given unto him”	Nebuchadnezzar was to become bestial, without a conscience and without reason. Caring only for self, gratifying the senses and spending his existence regardless of God or the future, all of which is characteristic of a beast
“Let seven times pass over him”	For seven years he was to imagine himself a beast of the field and eat grass like an ox
“His hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws”	It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Those who walk in pride God is able to abase.

No secret troubleth thee (4:9)

How blessed! Mysteries on every hand but not to *trouble* the humble, holy, children of God. We know that all things work together for good and hence the providences of God do not trouble us. We know that God is too wise to err and too good to be unkind and hence trials and tests, suffering and sorrow, bereavement and loss do not trouble us. We do not ask God, why? For no secret troubleth the saints. Let not your heart be troubled. God's children may discover from direct sources every secret which is right, proper and beneficial for them to have and know.

This matter is by the decree of the watchers

The watchers are heavenly, angelic messengers watching over the affairs of men. Important decisions affecting the welfare of men are here stated to be in the hands of these superintending unfallen spirit princes. All angels are ministering spirits. These watchers however, make decrees and execute them. The flourishing tree, setting forth the power, fame, wealth and prosperity of Nebuchadnezzar was to be cut down and the cutting down was the direct decision and decree of the angelic watchers.

The decree of the watchers

These holy, heavenly beings are ever on the watch to execute the will and word of God. In the great and good government of God there are not only millions of unfallen ministering spirits, but there are special angels who render special service for God and humanity.

Michael, the archangel, has special jurisdiction over the Jews while Gabriel seems supremely concerned for the Gentiles. There are also Cherubim and Seraphim, Morning Stars, Sons of the Morning, Sons of God and also an innumerable host of angels.

Then there is another special order of spirit intelligences called WATCHERS. These WATCHERS under God have power to issue decrees and order the execution of the same. **“FULL of eyes within and without they rest not day nor night.”** They are special WATCHERS over the affairs of men and are set to take care of the interests of God's government on earth. They watched the doings of Nebuchadnezzar and when his pride and insolence reached a certain limit they demanded judgment upon him. They had WATCHED over Abraham for good and over Sodom for evil and when Sodom's cup was full judgment fell. They had WATCHED over Lot for good and even pulled him out of the doomed city. They WATCHED over Nebuchadnezzar for good but when his sin reached its limit they determined a decree and demanded his doom.

The veil which hides the unseen world from our sight is again lifted for a moment as it is often lifted both in Daniel and Revelation. The WATCHERS refer to a heavenly court of angels interested only in the performance of the plans of God. The Judicial Court of Watchers or Holy Ones are a part of the great and glorious Divine organization and kingdom. The Judgment which came upon the king was according to the sentence of the heavenly seers and the word of the holy watchers. The study of Angelology is an important study and no student of the scriptures can afford to remain in ignorance concerning the constant activity of angels.

The WATCHERS demand the punishment of Nebuchadnezzar. They plead against him for his pride and impenitence. They decree his humiliation and judgment and the Lord God agrees and consents to the justice and righteousness of their demands and Nebuchadnezzar's doom is sealed. The decree of the watchers, the word of the holy ones, becomes the decree of the most High and Nebuchadnezzar was doomed. How dreadful to have holy angels plead against us because of our pride and wicked ways.

The basest—of men

God orders the events and disposes the destinies of men. He brings low and lifts up. He raises the beggar from the dung hill to set him among princes (I Samuel 2:8-9). He exalts the lowly and abases the proud and ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will and setteth up over it the basest of men.

It is thou

“**Thou art the man.**” The prophet speaks plainly and pointedly. There was no circumlocution. There was no trimming the edges or rounding the corners. There was no flattery. “**It is thou O King.**” While we may not rant, rage, or fume against sinners under a pretext of being hot or zealous we must not on the other hand use flattering words and compromise with sin under the pretext of winning sinners to the church, or keeping the young people. We must not play politics, but we may use tact and moderation.

Break off thy sins

Repent. Repent ye. Throughout the pages of scripture there is a steady constant insistence on repentance. The Bible is indeed a handbook on repentance. Repentance is commanded, urged, enforced and illustrated.

Over 60 times the New Testament alone enforces the necessity of repentance.

The great doctrine of Repentance occupies a preeminent place in the teaching of Christ and His inspired Apostles.

- The first recorded utterance of the forerunner of Christ was REPENT (Matthew 3:2).
- The first recorded word in the ministry of the Master Himself was REPENT (Matthew 4:17).
- When Peter was asked by the convicted crowd after the Day of Pentecost “**What shall we do?**” Peter's first word was REPENT (Acts 2:37-39).

There is no such thing as experiential Salvation or Sanctification apart from repentance. There is no such thing as vital communion or fellowship with God without repentance. The business of the God-called and God-ordained preacher is not to preach smooth things but saving things. It is not that which we WANT to hear, but that which we OUGHT to hear. We must not tone down the truth just to get people to join church.

The standard of truth must not be lowered simply to obtain a few extra silver dollars or dimes. God Almighty has given us His last Word. The last WORD is Christ and Christ's first word is REPENT.

“At sundry times and in divers manners God spake in times past,” but now God speaks to us through His son and the word of THE SON OF GOD is REPENT. The soul of man is in anarchy, the will of man is in rebellion and in fact the whole man by nature is against God, Christ and Holiness and hence the necessity of repentance. **“Break off thy sins.”**

The first word of God to sinful man then is REPENT. Some of us are getting sick and tired of hearing the parrot cry of “Only believe, . . . Only believe.” Devils believe and then tremble, but they remain devils. Demons know that Christ is the Son of God, but they remain demons. Men are not in any condition of heart to believe until after conviction and repentance. Both conviction and repentance must precede the step of faith which saves the soul. **“Break off thy sins”** is the burden of both Testaments.

If preaching that men should **“repent”** is too sensational, startling or vulgar then it is God's vulgarity. John Baptist was pushed into prison because he preached repentance, but no sooner was the voice of John stilled than the voice of Jesus was heard continuing the message exactly where John stopped and that message was REPENT. If repentance is shallow the Christian life will be shallow. Sin, the world and the devil must be forsaken or Christ cannot be received. **“Break off thy sins.”**

Repentance is more than conviction. Conviction is being awakened while repentance is getting up and getting out.

Repentance is more than SORROW. Weeping at funerals and sentimental plays and sissy songs is not repentance. Singing on Sunday either in church or home will not save the sinful soul of man.

The outstanding illustration of true repentance is to be found in the sublime story of the prodigal son. He left the whole sickening, hoggish business of sin and never stopped until he was in the father's arms and father's home. That is repentance.

A lengthening of thy tranquility

In loving loyalty to God and to the King, Daniel beseeches Nebuchadnezzar to repent and break off his sins by righteousness that perchance in the good providence of God the stroke of divine wrath about to fall might be withheld.

At the end of twelve months

These twelve months were months of grace in which Nebuchadnezzar was given opportunity to break off his sins. All things, however, continued as before and God's warnings together with the earnest exhortation of God's Prophet were neglected and forgotten.

Nebuchadnezzar glorified his own great Babylon and while the words were in his mouth a voice from heaven declared his doom. Pride goeth before a fall. Nebuchadnezzar's lust for pomp and power ended in lunacy.

Twelve months

Twelve months' grace was given. He was to be left without excuse. The lengthening of his tranquility and the continuation of his present prosperity depended on his penitence. 120 years of respite was granted to the antediluvians without avail and now twelve months are granted to Nebuchadnezzar also without avail. The goodness of God failed to lead them to repentance. The grace of God was given in vain to the Sons of Cain (Genesis 6:3) to Ahab (I Kings 21:27) and to Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:20).

Is not this great Babylon which I

The king's soul was filled with pride and self-idolatry. Instead of being penitent and humble he is high minded and haughty. While the arrogant words were on his lips the terrible voice of doom fell upon his rebellious ear and stubborn heart. The king's success in making Babylon the wonder of the world was employed to feed the fires of his imperial vanity. He forgot he was made of dust and therefore mortal. He also forgot that he was accountable to a higher power. While the boastful and blasphemous words were on his lips the sword of justice and judgment fell. Bereft of reason and utterly neglected and despised, for seven long years he lived as a beast of the field. Driven from men he ate grass as an ox till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

I . . . my . . . my

The five times repeated "I" of Lucifer introduced sin in the universe of God. The four times repeated "I" of Pharaoh placed him in direct antagonism to God and Israel and the impious opposition of Nebuchadnezzar with his egotistical "I" and "My" brought swift retribution upon him as it did upon Pharaoh and Lucifer before him.

His nails like . . . claws

Punished with madness and fancying himself a beast, Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon walked out of the Palace on all fours and for seven years was a fit subject for an asylum for the insane. It does not pay to go against God.

Nebuchadnezzar by no means has been the only person to become insane because of refusal to break with sin. If the truthful biography of insane people could be written what a volume it would be.

Lifted up mine eyes to heaven

The voice had issued from heaven (v. 31) and his reason left him.

His mental derangement had annihilated seven years of his life so that when reason returned he remembered only the event that immediately preceded his insanity and hence he lifted up his eyes toward heaven. Having robbed God of His honor and having in turn been robbed of his reason, now that he has been healed, he looks up, praises and honors God whose great goodness had restored his reason. The restored king is so thankful to God that he heaps words upon words in praise of God whose providence had both punished and purified him (4:34-37).

Mine understanding returned unto me

Nebuchadnezzar awakened to find himself living the life of a beast. His friends might have cut his hair and clipped his nails, but without understanding he would have remained in the field. Outward reformation, water baptism, confirmation and church membership are not enough. The prodigal must first come to himself or else remain a prodigal.

What doest thou?

The awakened, healed and restored king here rises into a true apprehension of the God of the Bible:

- (1) Most High
- (2) Ever living
- (3) Sovereign Ruler
- (4) Omnipotent
- (5) Righteous

“None can . . . say . . . what doest thou?” for all his ways are right.

Those who walk in pride He is able to abase

After his return to reason and to rule, Nebuchadnezzar becomes a preacher. He declares a truth well worth remembering today. Back, as from the dead, he warns all future generations against pride. Back as from the grave he preaches the virtues and blessings of humility for “*Those who walk in pride God is able to abase.*”

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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