

05-08-20_Daniel 4.28-37

Read Daniel 4:28-37 in your favorite translation. I will print the NET-2 translation.

28 Now all this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 After twelve months, he happened to be walking around on the battlements of the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king uttered these words: “Is this not the great Babylon that I have built for a royal residence by my own mighty strength and for my majestic honor?” 31 While these words were still on the king’s lips, a voice came down from heaven: “It is hereby announced to you, King Nebuchadnezzar, that your kingdom has been removed from you! 32 You will be driven from human society, and you will live with the wild animals. You will be fed grass like oxen, and seven periods of time will pass by for you before you understand that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms and gives them to whomever he wishes.”

33 Now in that very moment this pronouncement about Nebuchadnezzar came true. He was driven from human society, he ate grass like oxen, and his body became damp with the dew of the sky, until his hair became long like an eagle’s feathers, and his nails like a bird’s claws.

34 But at the end of the appointed time I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up toward heaven, and my sanity returned to me.

I extolled the Most High,
and I praised and glorified the one who lives forever.
For his authority is an everlasting authority,
and his kingdom extends from one generation to the next.
35 All the inhabitants of the earth are regarded as nothing.
He does as he wishes with the army of heaven
and with those who inhabit the earth.
No one slaps his hand
and says to him, ‘What have you done?’

36 At that time my sanity returned to me. I was restored to the honor of my kingdom, and my splendor returned to me. My ministers and my nobles were seeking me out, and I was reinstated over my kingdom. I became even greater than before. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, for all his deeds are right and his ways are just. He is able to bring down those who live in pride.

COMMENTS:

Today’s reading is Introduced by Daniel sounding like a mother. I think we can all hear the voice of our mother’s saying, “If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you a thousand times.” Daniel says it like a prophet. I would paraphrase v. 28 like this: Listen closely. All I am telling you now happened to this great king.

Daniel had also seen the special insights and care God had given to Nebuchadnezzar. He gave him a dream which showed him as one of the great leaders of the great world leaders. Then after he build the huge statue and wanted everyone to bow down to it, he had seen how the most high God had delivered the three young Jewish boys from the kings wrath and the fiery furnace.

Then God gave Nebuchadnezzar another dream which was to call him away from his pride and bow down in service to God. Daniel even warns him that if he will repent and follow God’s purposes, maybe God will prolong his prosperity.

Did all of God's favor go to waste on Nebuchadnezzar? I don't think so. He did after 7 years of living as an animal have his sanity and throne restored. I don't believe there is another story in the Bible which shows the folly of pride as much as this one.

It is only 12 months after the warning God had given to him, that he displays his pride. As he walks on the roof of the palace, his pride overflows as he says, "Is this not the great Babylon that I have build for a royal residence by my own mighty strength and for my majestic honor? While the words were still on the kings lips, God announces his judgment upon him. Everything Daniel had explained to him from his dream now came true.

We need to remember that God's promises of grace or of punishment will be fulfilled. He will be true to what he has spoken. That is why listening to the voice of God in the Scriptures is so important. Do not listen to the voice of desire, listen to the voice of God.

Verses 34 & 35 are a beautiful song of praise from Nebuchadnezzar to God. He will praise and glorify God because he lives forever. His authority lasts forever. The leaders of world only have authority for a limited amount of time. God's kingdom goes on from one generation to the next.

All the people of the world count for nothing in the presence of the almighty one. He does as he wishes with the armies of heaven and there is no one who can challenge or discipline him. He is over all people for all time and in all places. Nothing is beyond his control.

Nebuchadnezzar then gives continued praise to God as he reports how faithful he was in keeping his promises. The earthly king was restored by the King of kings and the Lord of lords. His confession in v. 37 says it well: "All his deeds are right and his ways are just. He is able to bring down those who live (walk) in pride.

REFLECTION QUESTION: Do you remember the last of the "solas" when we use all five? Soli Deo Gloria. Only God get the glory. It is not enough that we give him some of the glory or even most of the glory. It all belongs to him. Where did your time, talents, and treasure come from? It all comes from him therefore he gets all the glory. Do not ever be satisfied with giving God 99.9% of the glory. Give him 100% of the glory or else you are robbing God.