

• *Salvation begins when we are brought to repentance re-thinking one's entire attitude to life*

• *Nebuchadnezzar is being forced by God to look at the whole of life with different eyes*

1. Nebuchadnezzar came to salvation because he had a faithful friend in Daniel

• *Daniel is distressed because he is not eager that the king should go insane*

• *Daniel gives the interpretation*

• *The king's repentance short-lived*

Salvation begins when we are brought to repentance. Repentance is being forced to re-think one's entire attitude to life. It is to change the mind. It is to come to the realization that God is one's only hope of salvation. It is to be ready to totally and utterly submit to him. Repentance in **this** sense is the first breath of faith. It is the demonstration that faith is rising in the heart.

God is bringing Nebuchadnezzar to repentance. Nebuchadnezzar is afraid¹. He knows that he needs help², and is reduced to desperation in his desire to find out what was happening to him. Nebuchadnezzar is being forced to look at the whole of life with different eyes. He knows he needs God to help him. He asks the help of Daniel, God's servant³. He is told the vision⁴. He is about to come to a knowledge of God's power and sovereignty⁵, and he is asking for the interpretation of the dream⁶.

1. Nebuchadnezzar came to salvation because he had a faithful friend in Daniel. It must have been frightening for Daniel to tell Nebuchadnezzar what the vision meant. He could have just as well invented something more flattering. One gets the impression that Nebuchadnezzar had come to highly respect Daniel. Daniel had been faithful to him. Ever since Daniel had interpreted the dream of Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar had respected him. But it must have been frightening for Daniel to know what this dream meant. People do not generally appreciate the bringer of bad news, and Daniel's news was bad. Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful person in the world and Daniel had to tell him he was about to go insane! How would Nebuchadnezzar react? On a previous occasion he had told Nebuchadnezzar he was the head of gold in the vision which Daniel interpreted. Now Daniel has to tell him something entirely different. Daniel is distressed by what he knows is the interpretation of the dream¹. It seems Daniel and the king had a good relationship.

The tree is the king¹. The angel's cutting down the tree is a prediction that the king is to go insane. 'Watcher' is a name for an angel. Seven periods of time will go by – meaning the sickness will last a long time². Daniel gives details. Nebuchadnezzar will become like an animal³. He will stay insane for a long time⁴ but yet will have enough sanity to know his condition is brought about by God. When he acknowledges God's sovereignty he will be restored⁵. The only hope that there is that Nebuchadnezzar may avoid the judgement of God is if he breaks away from his sins immediately⁶.

It all takes place as God had said. A year later Nebuchadnezzar's anxieties were over. He had recovered from his fears¹! True conversion does not come until we are gripped by God's word to us in a way that does not get forgotten a few months later! Nebuchadnezzar's fears were a few steps in the direction of repentance but nothing has really gripped him so as to turn his life around. Then God steps in! At the height of his boasting and self-

1 4:5
2 4:6-9

3 4:8-9
4 4:10-17
5 4:17
6 4:18

1 4:19

1 4:20-22
2 4:23
3 4:24-25a
4 4:25b

5 4:26
6 4:27

• *Nebuchadnezzar returns to his boasting*

• *Suddenly the warning vision is fulfilled – then after a long time repentance and faith followed by restoration*

2. Kings and monarchs and presidents can come to salvation

• *Nebuchadnezzar was the world's most powerful person in his time – yet God brought him to repentance*

3. The way to salvation is repentance

• *Powerful chastening brought about a real change*

• *What might we need if we are slow to repent?*

confidence God humbles him. It is interesting how Daniel 4:30 is virtually the opposite of Romans 11:33–36. Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Is this not great Babylon which I have built ... by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?' He was saying in effect, 'This glorious city is **from me**; I planned it. This glorious city is **through me**; I brought it into being and keep it functioning. This glorious city is **for me**; it will show forth the glory of my majesty.' But of course Nebuchadnezzar's behaviour was the height of blasphemy and was soon powerfully chastised.

Suddenly the warning-vision was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar lost his sanity¹. His sickness lasted a long time, but Nebuchadnezzar turned in repentance and faith to God² and then was restored. He had to learn God's eternal power³, his powerful will and his sovereignty⁴. When he learned these things Nebuchadnezzar was restored⁵. The last line gives us the lesson he learned: 'Those who walk in pride he is able to bring low.'

2. Kings and monarchs and presidents can come to salvation. The Book of Daniel is about the opposition that the people of God received from earthly empires. Daniel 3 has shown us the kind of idolatry that pagan empires can turn to and what suffering can come to the people of God as a result. Yet – Daniel 3 has told us – God is well able to protect his people if he wishes. But now Daniel chapter 4 shows us another possibility. The ruler might himself come to salvation. It is not impossible. Nebuchadnezzar was the world's most powerful person in his time, yet God has demonstrated that there are ways of bringing even such a powerful person to repentance.

3. The way to salvation is to come to repentance. Nebuchadnezzar had a certain amount of knowledge of the God of Israel. He valued Daniel. Yet his knowledge, and his flattering remarks about God and Daniel, had not had any effect in bringing about any real change in Nebuchadnezzar. So God has had to act more powerfully to bring Nebuchadnezzar to repentance. God's powerful chastening in the life of Nebuchadnezzar brought him to his senses. What might we need if we are slow in coming to repentance?

1 4:28-30

1 4:31-33

2 4:34

3 4:34

4 4:35

5 4:37



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