**Surviving in Dangerous Times – Lesson 4 – Daniel 4**

I. Review

II. Some prefacing remarks

III. Nebuchadnezzar makes a proclamation (v1-3)

 A. Format of this chapter is a flashback

 1. First three verses are actually end of the account; v4-37 are beginning of the account

 2. Done this way to emphasize result of the account – repeated in v17, 25, 32, 34-35, 37

 3. Also builds curiosity and suspense

 B. Timeframe – possibly from 583-575 BC – archeological evidence for this date – no Babylonian record of any government or military activity from 582-575 BC

 C. Audience – all peoples, nations and men of every language that live in all the earth

 D. Declaring signs and wonders which God did for him – essentially this is his testimony

 E. Praise to God (Ps 72:18)

IV. Nebuchadnezzar’s flashback account of his dream (v4-33)

 A. God speaks to men to keep men from pride, but they fail to listen (Job 33:14-18)

 B. A dream about 8 yrs prior to this proclamation – “Before” part of his testimony (v4-18)

 1. Circumstances – at ease in his house and flourishing in his kingdom

 2. Character of dream – antithesis of his outward circumstances

 3. Commanded all the wise men of the kingdom to interpret the dream

 a. King related dream details

 b. None could interpret – a testimony to their limits and failure of pagan religion

 4. A proven interpreter comes to help

 a. Belteshazzar (may Bel protect his life according to the name of the king’s god)

 b. Spirit of the Holy God resides in him

 c. King related the dream and asked for interpretation

 5. King explains content of the dream

 a. A large tree in the midst of the earth

 (1) Grew large, became strong, visible to ends of the earth

 (2) Beautiful foliage, abundant fruit

 (3) Animals rested in its shade and fed themselves from it

 b. Angelic watcher, a holy one spoke and commanded the tree to be chopped down

 (1) Tree chopped down, branches cut off, foliage stripped, fruit scattered

 (2) Animals fled

 (3) Stump of tree left with roots in the ground, band of iron and bronze around the stump

 (4) Stump becomes personified – suddenly no longer just a tree or a stump, but rather a person represented by the stump

 (5) Person is drenched with dew and eats grass like animals

 (a) Zoanthropy – rare delusion – person believes himself to be an animal

 (b) Boanthropy – thinking and acting like a cow or ox

 (6) Person’s mind changes to that of an animal

 c. Duration of angelic watchman’s sentence: seven periods of time that pass over him – “periods of time” are unspecified; could be months, years, or seasons

 d. Reasons for angelic watchman’s sentence

 (1) That the living may know that Supreme God is ruler over realm of mankind

 (2) That living may know God bestows kingdoms on whom He wishes (Lk 1:52)

 C. Dream interpreted by Daniel (v19-27)

 1. Initial reaction – appalled and alarmed

 a. Calmed by the king

 b. Daniel declares that he wished the dream applied to king’s foes

 2. Courageously declares the truth while interpreting the dream

 a. Magnificent tree represents the king

 (1) Had become great and grown strong

 (2) Majesty had become great and reached to the sky

 b. Chopping down represented fact that the king would be driven away (Is 46:10-11)

 c. Would eat grass and be drenched with dew of heaven for 7 periods of time

 d. Would last until king recognized that God was sovereign and gave rule over mankind to whom He desired – pride was the issue

 e. Good news was that his kingdom would return to him at end of 7 periods of time

 3. Compassionate exhortation from Daniel to the king

 a. A humanly unexpected response from Daniel

 b. A true expression of concern with a ray of hope for the king

 c. Break away from your sins and iniquities – repent

 d. Do righteousness

 e. Show mercy to the poor

 f. God may prolong your prosperity

 D. Bottom line summary – God rules the kingdoms of men, and rulers serve at His pleasure

 E. Consequences of failing to repent – the “During” part of his testimony (v29-33)

 1. A year later – God’s grace shown in delaying one year for time for the king to repent

 a. God gave revelation, admonition and opportunity

 b. Warning went unheeded – threat from God ignored

 2. Pride on king’s part – eyes on self and accomplishments – Deut 8:16-17, Prov 16:18

 3. God removes the king’s sovereignty and humbles him

 4. Driven away from mankind and dwells with animals (Is 40:23)

 a. Becomes needy lowly creature – body drenched with dew

 b. Hair grew like eagles’ feathers and nails like bird’s claws

 c. In all this, God showing mercy rather than swift judgment

V. Nebuchadnezzar comes to his senses (v34-37)

 A. Reason returned 🡪 praise to God (Rom 1:21-23)

 B. At end of the period king acknowledges God

 1. Blessed God, praised and honored Him

 2. Acknowledged God’s kingdom is everlasting

 C. Compares man with God

 1. All inhabitants of earth are as nothing compared to God

 2. God does according to His will – no person can ward off His power

 D. King’s kingdom restored, but without pride – spoke of God rather than himself – the “After” part of his testimony

 1. God restored the king’s majesty and splendor

 2. Counselors and nobles seek him again

 3. God restored king’s earthly sovereignty, and it surpassed his former state

 E. A final proclamation: I praise, exalt, and honor God; His works are true, and His ways are just; He humbles those who walk in pride

VI. Some final thoughts

 A. Humility a major theme of this chapter – Jas 4:6,10, Rom 12:3

 B. No one beyond the reach of the gospel message regardless of outward appearances – speak courageously and honestly to them – God is one who does the work