

Daniel 4 10-18-15 PM

An interesting fact: in the whole of the Bible, there is only one section that was written by a Gentile. There are a couple of books that have an unknown author (the Kings and Chronicles; Hebrews; some of the Psalms and Proverbs), and there are a few authors we know by name only (Lemuel, Agur, etc). But there is only one time in both the Old Testament and New Testament that a known Gentile composed Scripture. The material is Daniel 4, and the man is the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful man in the world in his day. His empire had conquered a vast area, and was until that time the most powerful kingdom in history. From the Bible we know he conquered Judah, destroyed Jerusalem's walls, and destroyed the temple. Yet the only thing that history owns that he personally composed is Daniel 4. What is remarkable is that it is not a testimony to his greatness, but to his great failing.

The chapter covers a dream that he had that Daniel reveals to be about him. He saw a great tree (himself) that covered the wealth. He then saw an angel come and cut it down, and heard that for seven seasons the stump would remain alive but with the mind of a beast. Daniel explained to him the meaning of the dream, and that it could be avoided if only he would repent.

We then jump ahead twelve months. Nebuchadnezzar is looking at his city and boasts of his prestige when he hears a heavenly voice speak. He loses his mind, and lives like an animal for seven years. At the end of that time, he acknowledged God, and his senses (and his entire kingdom) returned. Thus he concludes to us that "I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

Pride is a deadly thing. We can easily begin to think too much of ourselves. God's message to Nebuchadnezzar (and therefore to us) is that *"The Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes."* Maybe we can put it more simply than that: God is in charge. Whatever successes we have in life we owe to God, not to our own abilities or resources. James reminds us that *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning"* (1:17).

God brings us our successes. He is the reason we can accomplish our goals. Samuel reminded Saul in I Samuel 15 that when God found Saul, he was a little man (not physically, but in accomplishments). God made him everything he was, and he was rejecting God.

Give God the Glory. He is in charge, and He is the reason we succeed.