

# Nebuchadnezzar

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon (All-age service)  
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2010

## Intro-

- We will shortly see Dawne and the children perform a wonderful dance of a dream that an incredible king had. Let's look in the Bible at the dream, what it meant, and what happened to that particular king.

## Read Daniel 4:1, 18-37

We will look at 3 mistakes this king made and look at how we can be different.

## **Neb missed the point of the miracles- (do a blindfolded crisp taste test)- 4:25 'until you know that the Most high rules'**

- This king had 'tasted' the power of God perhaps more than any other pagan king had:
  1. He had seen how Daniel and his 3 friends (renamed Shadrach Meshach and Abednigo) had more wisdom in them than the best of his wise men because they personally knew God.
  2. He had a dream from God of all the major empires which would come after him, revealed in the form of a statue starting out as gold at the top and ending up as iron and clay in the toes. No one was able to say what the dream meant as Neb would not reveal the content of the dream, however God revealed to Daniel both the dream and it's meaning- it was a miracle!
  3. He had thrown Daniel's 3 companions into a fiery furnace after they would not worship a huge gold statue he put up. The 3 men were seen walking around in the fire, with another person who looked a bit like God, and they came out unharmed and not even smelling of smoke!
- Despite seeing some amazing miracles that God did Neb had not opened his own life to God- he did not want to know God for himself! He had completely missed the point of the miracles- to make people hungry to know God.
- Miracles are tasters for a friendship with God. 'O taste and see that the Lord is good'- Pringles- 'once you pop you just can't stop' (the effect of monosodium glutamate). 10 lepers healed & only 1 came back to thank Jesus.

### **Application**

- Be thankful to God for all He has done. Recount the things He has done- in the Bible, in friends lives, in own life, answers to prayer. Forget not His benefits- don't take our freedom for granted make most of it- read Bible- some countries illegal.
- Think about where you are with God. Do you really know Him? Set it as your goal to know Him (by experience). Ask Him to reveal more of Himself to you. Spend time seeking Him on your own- don't just live on meetings. Tackle the hindrances to knowing God better: busyness; laziness; fear of the cost.
- A child whose father was a Christian singer was approached by 2 boys who were bragging about their dads. 'My father is the town mayor' the one said, another 'my dad is head of the council'. The boy replied, 'That's nothing, my dad knows God' and gave his father the best compliment ever. Can it be said of you, like Daniel, that you 'know' God? Or are you like Neb who just 'knew a man who did'?

## **Neb got proud when God used him- 4:30- 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honour of my majesty?'**

- Neb was an amazing king in many ways. He is reputed to be the creator of one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world (along with the great pyramid of cheops the only

wonder still in existence today). His wonder was the hanging gardens of Babylon, described as being made to cheer up his homesick wife who was the daughter of the king of the Medes from Persia area whose home was green, rugged and mountainous. He created an artificial mountain out of high terraces containing the most wonderful plants and the largest of trees. The Greek geographer Strabo, who described the gardens in first century BC, wrote, "It consists of vaulted terraces raised one above another, and resting upon cube-shaped pillars. These are hollow and filled with earth to allow trees of the largest size to be planted. The pillars, the vaults, and terraces are constructed of baked brick and asphalt."

- He extended the fortifications of Babylon. It is said of the passage on top of the wall of Babylon that it was so wide that 'four-horse chariots can easily pass one another' (Strabo).
- Bricks used in his construction works were stamped with Nebuchadnezzar's name and achievements on them (bricks like this can be seen in the British Museum). Also clay cylinders with his achievements were laid in the foundations of buildings.
- The beautiful Ishtar Gate and processional way (used to parade their gods during the New Year festival) was adorned by Nebuchadnezzar with blue glazed bricks with over 575 beautiful depictions of animals adorning it. Once excavated it was moved and reconstructed at a museum in Berlin and can be seen today.
- The Lord allowed Nebuchadnezzar to destroy God's temple in Jerusalem (because of the sin of the people) and took it's gold back to Babylon and exiled the people to Babylon- this must surely have been a cause for pride and arrogance in his life.
- Neb actually thought his own power and might had caused all this and as soon as the words are on his lips declaring his own greatness judgement comes from the Lord

#### **Application**

- Have a realistic view of yourself- be honest about what you do well and badly- be self-aware. Famous people can have 'we love you' from too many people close to them and it can lead them into thinking they are the best thing since sliced bread.
- Be wise about what you speak about yourself. The bible says 'let another man's lips praise you and not your own'
- Learn to accept correction as well as praise.

#### **Neb only came to his senses the hard way**

- When I was younger I used to be into spiderman and fell out of a tree when dressed up as spidey. My sister was into horses. She used to draw horses, read about them and dream about them. One time she galloped around the square where we lived and ate grass, because she so much wanted to be like a horse. What may be a childhood fantasy for some became a reality for Neb. For 7 years Nebuchadnezzar lost the plot. He basically thought he was an animal and decided to live outside as an animal and eat grass like a cow. He lost the ability to care for himself and his nails grew like claws and his hair grey and became matted and dread-locked so that it looked like eagles feathers. There is a medical condition where people think they have become an animal- it is called lycanthropy. Thought to be behind the werewolf myths. Can be any animal not just a wolf. It is a delusion- a fixed belief that cannot be shifted- like when I chatted to the queen (except it was not the queen, it was someone who was deluded).
- A clay tablet in the British Museum (BM34113) describes Nebuchadnezzar's behaviour during his insanity: "His life appeared of no value to him... then he gives an entirely different order... he does not show love to son or daughter... family and clan does not exist." There is also a notable absence of any record of acts or decrees by the king during 582 to 575 BC

- Why would allow such a thing to happen? To bring Neb to repentance- and God had tried every other way to no avail. And it worked! He did repent! God sometimes has to take us the long way round to get us to the place He originally intended us to go to. God loves us and not all things we go through are discipline from God (Jesus went through tough times, and the godly will go through persecution), but some things are. The temptation is to rebel against discipline, but it is far easier if we work through it. Hebrews says 'endure hardships as discipline- God is treating you as sons'. God's discipline is always in love.
- The Bible says 'do not be like a horse who needs to be led by a bit in it's mouth'- allow God to lead you by speaking to you- heed His voice. If God is telling you to do something obey quickly and it will be far easier.
- Is there something God has given you to do that you have not done? Maybe it was something He said many, many years ago.

### **Summary**

- So Neb although in many ways a great king, was out of sorts with God- missing the point of the wonders God did, getting proud and also having to go through a crazy situation before he was willing to obey God.
- Neb's life-story can be summarised by saying that rather than allowing God to be on the throne of his life, he himself was on the throne of his life. It is so easy to pray 'Your kingdom come' when it relates to the world around us, but totally different when we pray 'Your kingdom come in my life'. This must result in life-change on our part. Are we willing for it?

**Children-** Dance performance

**Song-** *Glorious Day (Living He Loved Me)- Casting Crowns*