

Readings

Scripture

²⁸All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰and the king answered and said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" ³¹While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, ³²and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." ³³Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

³⁴At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; ³⁵all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" ³⁶At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. ³⁷Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

- Daniel 4:28-37 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

Nebuchadnezzar made the most fatal mistake an individual can make. He assumed that he would interpret God's activity by his own plumb line. It is the same attitude that Peter rebuked when he said in 2 Peter 3:3-10, "Scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, 'Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.' For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief..." Nebuchadnezzar scoffed at the warnings that had been planted in his conscience – and the day of the Lord did come.

- Sinclair Ferguson, *Daniel* (p. 100-101)

"Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."

- Psalm 127:1 (English Standard Version)

Sermon Outline

My Reason Returned to Me *Life in a Foreign Land: A Field Guide*
Daniel 4:28-37 Brad Anderson

The kindness of God is meant to lead people through a process of repentance...
(Romans 2:4; Daniel 4:37)

What can we learn about the process of repentance as we observe Nebuchadnezzar's life?

What is sin? All sin by definition is insanity... (Daniel 4:28-33)

- We were made to live under the rule of God, not assume the place of God...
- We were made to live connected to God, not independent from God...

How can our insane condition be restored? Through God's gift of repentance...

 (Daniel 4:27, 34, 36)

What results from God's gift of repentance? The right worship of God...

 (Daniel 4:1-3, 34-35, 37)

Reflection Questions

 (taken in part from the *Serendipity Study Bible for Groups*)

- Share a time when you delayed doing something urgent or needful only to regret it? What were the results? How did you feel?
- Has "all this happened" to the king by chance? By decree? By default? What clue does "twelve months later" provide?
- How is the voice from heaven shown to be powerful (Daniel 4:31-33)? How does the immediacy and power of God's word relate to Genesis 1?
- With his sanity restored, what does the king conclude about "the Most High"? How does his testimony strike you?
- How do you account for the king's restored greatness and prosperity?
- How have you shown courage in declaring God's word to others, both the good and the bad news?
- At this time, Babylon with its hanging gardens is a "great" nation. Why does such success make change or repentance difficult? How does this relate to Jesus' word about the rich entering the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:24)?