

Daniel 4:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:

Analysis

The command to bind the stump with iron and brass introduces complex symbolism. The stump represents the preserved core of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and person—judgment doesn't completely destroy, leaving possibility for restoration. The binding with metals (iron and brass/bronze) may signify both protection (preventing animals from damaging the stump) and restraint (preventing premature regrowth). The instruction 'let it be wet with the dew of heaven' indicates exposure to natural elements—the exalted king will be brought low to experience beast-like existence under open sky. The phrase 'let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth' confirms the personal application: Nebuchadnezzar will graze like cattle, completely stripped of royal dignity and human society. This comprehensive humiliation targets the pride that attributed imperial success to personal merit rather than divine grant.

Historical Context

The binding of stumps with metal bands was actually practiced in ancient arboriculture to prevent splitting while encouraging regrowth—a practical detail adding realism to the dream imagery. Nebuchadnezzar's coming exposure 'to the dew of heaven' contrasts sharply with his luxurious palace life described in verse 4. Ancient Near Eastern kings lived in elaborate comfort—fine foods, luxurious

furnishings, constant servants. The prospect of dwelling with beasts represented complete reversal of status. This humiliation would have been unimaginable to ancient audiences: kings were considered semi-divine, above common humanity. God reducing a king to beast-level existence demonstrated total sovereignty over human pride.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Why does God preserve a 'stump' rather than completely destroying proud rulers?
2. How does Nebuchadnezzar's exposure to natural elements ('dew of heaven,' 'beasts,' 'grass') symbolize being stripped of artificial human pride?
3. What does the combination of preservation and restraint (stump bound with metal) teach about God's discipline?

