

Daniel 4:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

Analysis

The command to leave the tree's stump indicates preservation amidst judgment: 'thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.' This promise provides hope—the judgment is temporary, not permanent; restoration follows repentance. The phrase 'thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee' guarantees that though Nebuchadnezzar loses kingdom temporarily, he'll regain it after learning the lesson. The expression 'the heavens do rule' (Aramaic **יְהִי־לְעָלָת שָׁמָיָה** / shamayya shallitin) uses 'heavens' as reverent circumlocution for God (similar to Matthew's 'kingdom of heaven'), emphasizing divine sovereignty. This verse offers remarkable grace: despite severe judgment, God promises restoration. The condition is clear—'after that thou shalt have known'—restoration requires genuine recognition of divine sovereignty, not merely time passage. This demonstrates God's redemptive purposes: He disciplines to restore, humbles to heal.

Historical Context

The promise of kingdom restoration was crucial. Ancient Near Eastern succession typically involved usurpation—a king's prolonged absence or incapacity invited coups. Yet Daniel prophesies that despite seven years' absence, Nebuchadnezzar's throne remains secure. This requires divine intervention: God not only judges but protects the judgment's pedagogical purpose by preserving the king's eventual restoration. Historically, Nebuchadnezzar did reign until his death (562 BC),

suggesting the prophecy fulfilled: after his humbling and restoration, he completed his reign. The kingdom's preservation during his absence testified to God's sovereign control over political succession and palace intrigue.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does God's promise to restore the kingdom after judgment teach about divine discipline's redemptive goals?
2. How does the phrase 'the heavens do rule' function as both theological truth and pastoral comfort?
3. Why is recognition of God's sovereignty ('after that thou shalt have known') the condition for restoration?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵם רְאֵיתִי	וְאֵם רְאֵיתִי	לִמְשָׁבֵךְ	עַקְרָב	שָׁרֵשׁ וּהַיִלְלָה	
H1768	And whereas they commanded	H560	to leave	the stump	roots
			H7662	H6136	H1768
אִילָגָה אֶלְךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ תְּהִלֵּתְךָ	אִילָגָה אֶלְךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ תְּהִלֵּתְךָ	לְהַבְּנָה	כִּי תְּהִלֵּתְךָ	מִן	לְהַבְּנָה
אִילָגָה אֶלְךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ תְּהִלֵּתְךָ	אִילָגָה אֶלְךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ תְּהִלֵּתְךָ	H0	shall be sure	unto thee after	H1768
H363	of the tree	H4437		H4481	
			H7011		
שְׁמָנָה תְּהִלֵּתְךָ	שְׁמָנָה תְּהִלֵּתְךָ	לְהַבְּנָה	שְׁמָנָה תְּהִלֵּתְךָ		
that thou shalt have known	H1768	do rule	that the heavens		
H3046		H7990	H8065		

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 4:15 (Parallel theme): 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:

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