

Daniel 4:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

Analysis

Immediate judgment follows the boast: 'While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.' The timing—'while the word was in the king's mouth'—emphasizes the direct connection between prideful speech and divine response. The 'voice from heaven' represents direct divine intervention. The declaration 'the kingdom is departed from thee' announces immediate deposition. God doesn't gradually reduce the king's power; sovereignty transfers instantaneously. This demonstrates that all human authority exists by divine grant and can be revoked immediately.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kings feared divine disfavor manifested through military defeat or physical/mental illness removing them from power. Mesopotamian omen literature sought to predict such events through divination. Nebuchadnezzar's sudden affliction fulfilled predicted judgment. Court officials apparently managed governmental affairs during his illness (v. 36), suggesting administrative structures continued functioning. Historical records show gaps in Nebuchadnezzar's later reign where some scholars speculate this illness occurred, though extra-biblical evidence is inconclusive.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the immediate timing of judgment teach that God responds directly to prideful rebellion rather than overlooking it indefinitely?
2. What does the sudden removal of kingdom teach about sovereignty as divine gift that can be instantly revoked?

Interlinear Text

וְ	עַ	וְ	מִ	מַלְכָא	אָ	מַלְכָא	לְ	לְ	שָׁמְיָא	מִ	לְ	נֶפֶל
While	the word	mouth	saying O king	a voice	from	heaven	there fell					
H5751	H4406	H6433	H4430	H7032	H4481	H8065	H5308					
לְ	לְ	אָ	מַלְכָתְךָ	רָ	אָמְרִים	תְּבָocְדָךְ	רָ	מַלְכָא	אָ	מַלְכָתְהִ	לְ	
H0	to thee it is spoken		Nebuchadnezzar		saying O king			The kingdom				
	H560		H5020		H4430		H4437					

מִ	תְּ	מִ	מִ
is departed	from	from	departed
H5709	H4481		

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 16:7 (Parallel theme): And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

Matthew 3:17 (Parallel theme): And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Luke 12:20 (Parallel theme): But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

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