

Daniel 4:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

Analysis

The judgment's terms specify: 'they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.' The reduction from king to beast represents complete humiliation of human pride. 'Seven times' likely means seven years, a period of complete testing. The purpose clause reveals pedagogical intent: 'until thou know that the most High ruleth.' God uses this extreme measure to teach what mercy, prosperity, and warning couldn't accomplish—absolute dependence on divine sovereignty.

Historical Context

The condition described resembles lycanthropy or boanthropy, where individuals believe themselves animals and behave accordingly. Medical literature documents rare cases of such psychotic conditions. Some scholars suggest porphyria or other metabolic diseases. Regardless of medical diagnosis, the text presents this as divine judgment causing the king to live as a beast. Ancient Near Eastern literature contains examples of kings afflicted with illnesses as divine punishment.

The 'seven times' reflects biblical use of seven as complete period (cf. Daniel 4:16, 23, 25).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the reduction from king to beast illustrate the depth of humiliation necessary to break profound pride?
2. What does the purpose clause teach about God's severe mercies—using extreme means to accomplish what gentle warnings failed to achieve?

Interlinear Text

וּמִן	אֲנָשִׁים	לְ	וְיָ	וְעִם	חַיֵּי הַ
thee from	men	H0	And they shall drive	shall be with	the beasts
H4481	H606		H2957	H5974	H2423
בְּכַ	מִדְּבָרְךָ	עֵשְׂבָא	כְּתוֹרִין	לְ	
of the field	and thy dwelling	grass	as oxen	H0	
H1251	H4070	H6211	H8450		
וְיַעֲמֶנּוּ	וְשִׁבְעָה	עֲדָנִים	וְיַחֲלֹף	עַל יָדְךָ	עַד
they shall make thee to eat	and seven	times	shall pass	over	thee until
H2939	H7655	H5732	H2499	H5922	H5705
דָּי	תִּנָּדַע	דָּי	עֲלֵיָא	בְּמַלְכֻת	אֲנָשִׁים
H1768	thou know	H1768	that the most High	in the kingdom	men
	H3046	H7990	H5943	H4437	H606
וְלִמֵּן	יְדִי	יֵצֵב	וְיִתְּנָהּ		
it to whomsoever	H1768	he will	and giveth		
H4479		H6634	H5415		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 27:5 (Parallel theme): I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.

Daniel 5:21 (Kingdom): And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

Exodus 8:10 (Parallel theme): And he said, To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God.

Exodus 9:29 (Parallel theme): And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the LORD'S.

Joshua 4:24 (Parallel theme): That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.

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