

Daniel 4

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

[1] King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! [2] It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.

[3] How great are his signs,

how mighty his wonders!

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,

and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream

[4] I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. [5] I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. [6] So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. [7] Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the

astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation.

[8] At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in

whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream, saying, [9] “O Belteshazzar, chief of the

magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for

you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. [10] The visions of my head as I

lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. [11]

The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the

whole earth. [12] Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of

the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed

from it.

[13] “I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from

heaven. [14] He proclaimed aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off

its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. [15] But

leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of

the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the

earth. [16] Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven

periods of time pass over him. [17] The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.' [18] This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you."

Daniel Interprets the Second Dream

[19] Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, "Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies! [20] The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, [21] whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived—[22] it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. [23] And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop

down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,' [24] this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, [25] that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. [26] And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules. [27] Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity."

Nebuchadnezzar's Humiliation

[28] All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. [29] At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, [30] and 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?" [31] While 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, [32] and 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." [33] Immediately 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.

Nebuchadnezzar Restored

[34] At 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;

[35] all 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?"

[36] At 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. [37] Now 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. (ESV)

NASB

The King Acknowledges God

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound! 2 It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me.

3 "How great are His signs

And how mighty are His wonders!

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom

And His dominion is from generation to generation.

The Vision of a Great Tree

4 "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace. 5 I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. 6 So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me. 8 But finally Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and I related the dream to him, saying, 9 'O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell me the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation.

10 'Now these were the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed: I was looking, and behold, there was a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great.

11 'The tree grew large and became strong

And its height reached to the sky,

And it was visible to the end of the whole earth.

12 'Its foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant,

And in it was food for all.

The beasts of the field found shade under it,

And the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches,

And all living creatures fed themselves from it.

13 'I was looking in the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed, and behold, an angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven.

14 'He shouted out and spoke as follows:

Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,

Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit;

Let the beasts flee from under it

And the birds from its branches.

15 "Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground,

But with a band of iron and bronze around it

In the new grass of the field;

And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven,

And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth.

16 "Let his mind be changed from that of a man

And let a beast's mind be given to him,

And let seven periods of time pass over him.

17 "This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers

And the decision is a command of the holy ones,

In order that the living may know

That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind,

And bestows it on whom He wishes

And sets over it the lowliest of men."

18 This is the dream which I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell me its interpretation, inasmuch as none of the wise men of my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.'

Daniel Interprets the Vision

19 "Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, 'Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.'

Beltshazzar replied, 'My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries! 20 The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth 21 and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged— 22 it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth. 23 In that the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, "Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him," 24 this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: 25 that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes. 26 And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules. 27 Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.'

The Vision Fulfilled

28 "All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. 29 Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?' 31 While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, 32 and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.' 33 Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

34 "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward 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.

35 "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,

But He does according to His will in the host of heaven

And among the inhabitants of earth;

And no one can ward off His hand

Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

36 At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

NIV

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Tree

1 King Nebuchadnezzar,

To the nations and peoples of every language, who live in all the earth:

May you prosper greatly!

2 It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.

3 How great are his signs,

how mighty his wonders!

His kingdom is an eternal kingdom;

his dominion endures from generation to generation.

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. 5 I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. 6 So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. 7 When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. 8 Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

9 I said, "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me. 10 These are the visions I saw while lying in bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. 11 The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. 12 Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the wild animals found shelter, and the birds lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.

13 "In the visions I saw while lying in bed, I looked, and there before me was a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven. 14 He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. 15 But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field.

" "Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. 16 Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him.

17 “The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.’

18 “This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

Daniel Interprets the Dream

19 Then Daniel (also called Belshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, “Belshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.”

Belshazzar answered, “My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! 20 The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, 21 with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the wild animals, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds— 22 Your Majesty, you are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

23 “Your Majesty saw a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live with the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.’

24 “This is the interpretation, Your Majesty, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: 25 You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes. 26 The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. 27 Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”

The Dream Is Fulfilled

28 All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, 30 he said, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?”

31 Even as the words were on his lips, a voice came from heaven, “This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. 32 You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes.”

33 Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

34 At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever.

His dominion is an eternal dominion;

his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

35 All the peoples of the earth

are regarded as nothing

He does as he pleases

with the powers of heaven

and the peoples of the earth.

No one can hold back his hand

or say to him: "What have you done?"

36 At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

NKJV

Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king,

To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you.

2 I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.

3 How great are His signs,

And how mighty His wonders!

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,

And His dominion is from generation to generation.

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. 5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. 6 Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation. 8 But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, saying: 9 "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.

10 "These were the visions of my head while on my bed:

I was looking, and behold,

A tree in the midst of the earth,

And its height was great.

11 The tree grew and became strong;

Its height reached to the heavens,

And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.

12 Its leaves were lovely,

Its fruit abundant,

And in it was food for all.

The beasts of the field found shade under it,
The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches,
And all flesh was fed from it.

13 "I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. 14 He cried aloud and said thus:

'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,
Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.

Let the beasts get out from under it,
And the birds from its branches.

15 Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth,
Bound with a band of iron and bronze,
In the tender grass of the field.

Let it be wet with the dew of heaven,
And let him graze with the beasts
On the grass of the earth.

16 Let his heart be changed from that of a man,
Let him be given the heart of a beast,
And let seven times pass over him.

17 'This decision is by the decree of the watchers,
And the sentence by the word of the holy ones,
In order that the living may know
That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men,
Gives it to whomever He will,
And sets over it the lowest of men.'

18 “This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you.”

Daniel Explains the Second Dream

19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. So the king spoke, and said, “Belshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.”

Belshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!

20 “The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which could be seen by all the earth, 21 whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home— 22 it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.

23 “And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him’; 24 this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: 25 They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

26 “And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules. 27 Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s Humiliation

28 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king spoke, saying, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?”

31 While the word was still in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! 32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.”

33 That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

34 And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding 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 is from generation to generation.

35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;

He does according to His will in the army of heaven

And among the inhabitants of the earth.

No one can restrain His hand

Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

NLT

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream about a Tree

1 King Nebuchadnezzar sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world:

"Peace and prosperity to you!

2 "I want you all to know about the miraculous signs and wonders the Most High God has performed for me.

3 How great are his signs,

how powerful his wonders!

His kingdom will last forever,

his rule through all generations.

4 "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living in my palace in comfort and prosperity. 5 But one night I had a dream that frightened me; I saw visions that terrified me as I lay in my bed. 6 So I issued an order calling in all the wise men of Babylon, so they could tell me what my dream meant. 7 When all the magicians, enchanters, astrologers, and fortune-tellers came in, I told them the dream, but they could not tell me what it meant. 8 At last Daniel came in before me, and I told him the dream. (He was named Belteshazzar after my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

9 "I said to him, 'Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too great for you to solve. Now tell me what my dream means.

10 "'While I was lying in my bed, this is what I dreamed. I saw a large tree in the middle of the earth. 11 The tree grew very tall and strong, reaching high into the heavens for all the world to see. 12 It had fresh green leaves, and it was loaded with fruit for all to eat. Wild animals lived in its shade, and birds nested in its branches. All the world was fed from this tree.

13 "'Then as I lay there dreaming, I saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. 14 The messenger shouted,

"Cut down the tree and lop off its branches!

Shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit!

Chase the wild animals from its shade

and the birds from its branches.

15 But leave the stump and the roots in the ground,

bound with a band of iron and bronze

and surrounded by tender grass.

Now let him be drenched with the dew of heaven,

and let him live with the wild animals among the plants of the field.

16 For seven periods of time,

let him have the mind of a wild animal

instead of the mind of a human.

17 For this has been decreed by the messengers;

it is commanded by the holy ones,

so that everyone may know

that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world.

He gives them to anyone he chooses—

even to the lowliest of people.”

18 “‘Belteshazzar, that was the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now tell me what it means, for none of the wise men of my kingdom can do so. But you can tell me because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.’

Daniel Explains the Dream

19 “Upon hearing this, Daniel (also known as Belteshazzar) was overcome for a time, frightened by the meaning of the dream. Then the king said to him, ‘Belteshazzar, don’t be alarmed by the dream and what it means.’

“Belteshazzar replied, ‘I wish the events foreshadowed in this dream would happen to your enemies, my lord, and not to you! 20 The tree you saw was growing very tall and strong, reaching high into the heavens for all the world to see. 21 It had fresh green leaves and was loaded with fruit for all to eat. Wild animals lived in its shade, and birds nested in its branches. 22 That tree, Your Majesty, is you. For you have grown strong and great; your greatness reaches up to heaven, and your rule to the ends of the earth.

23 “‘Then you saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, “Cut down the tree and destroy it. But leave the stump and the roots in the ground, bound with a band of iron and bronze and surrounded by tender grass. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven. Let him live with the animals of the field for seven periods of time.”

24 “This is what the dream means, Your Majesty, and what the Most High has declared will happen to my lord the king. 25 You will be driven from human society, and you will live in the fields with the wild animals. You will eat grass like a cow, and you will be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses. 26 But the stump and roots of the tree were left in the ground. This means that you will receive your kingdom back again when you have learned that heaven rules.

27 “King Nebuchadnezzar, please accept my advice. Stop sinning and do what is right. Break from your wicked past and be merciful to the poor. Perhaps then you will continue to prosper.’

The Dream’s Fulfillment

28 “But all these things did happen to King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 Twelve months later he was taking a walk on the flat roof of the royal palace in Babylon. 30 As he looked out across the city, he said, ‘Look at this great city of Babylon! By my own mighty power, I have built this beautiful city as my royal residence to display my majestic splendor.’

31 “While these words were still in his mouth, a voice called down from heaven, ‘O King Nebuchadnezzar, this message is for you! You are no longer ruler of this kingdom. 32 You will be driven from human society. You will live in the fields with the wild animals, and you will eat grass like a cow. Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses.’

33 “That same hour the judgment was fulfilled, and Nebuchadnezzar was driven from human society. He ate grass like a cow, and he was drenched with the dew of heaven. He lived this way until his hair was as long as eagles’ feathers and his nails were like birds’ claws.

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

34 “After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever.

His rule is everlasting,

and his kingdom is eternal.

35 All the people of the earth

are nothing compared to him.

He does as he pleases

among the angels of heaven

and among the people of the earth.

No one can stop him or say to him,

'What do you mean by doing these things?'

36 "When my sanity returned to me, so did my honor and glory and kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored as head of my kingdom, with even greater honor than before.

37 "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and he is able to humble the proud."

NET

...{1} “King Nebuchadnezzar, to all peoples, nations, and language groups that live in all the land: Peace and prosperity!{2} [2] I am delighted to tell you about the signs and wonders that the most high God has done for me.

[3] “How great are his signs!

How mighty are his wonders!

His kingdom will last forever,{3}

and his authority continues from one generation to the next.”

NEBUCHADNEZZAR DREAMS OF A TREE CHOPPED DOWN

[4] (4:1){4} I, Nebuchadnezzar, was relaxing in my home,{5} living luxuriously{6} in my palace. [5] I saw a dream that{7} frightened me badly. The things I imagined while lying on my bed - these visions of my mind - were terrifying me. [6] So I issued an order{8} for all the wise men of Babylon to be brought{9} before me so that they could make known to me the interpretation of the dream. [7] When the magicians, astrologers, wise men, and diviners entered, I recounted the dream for them. But they were unable to make known its interpretation to me. [8] Later Daniel entered (whose name is Belteshazzar after the name of my god,{10} and in whom there is a spirit of the holy gods). I recounted the dream for him as well, [9] saying, “Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, in whom I know there to be a spirit of the holy gods and whom no mystery baffles, consider{11} my dream that I saw and set forth its interpretation! [10] Here are the visions of my mind{12} while I was on my bed.

While I was watching,

there was a tree in the middle of the land.{13}

It was enormously tall.{14}

[11] The tree grew large and strong.

Its top reached far into the sky;

it could be seen{15} from the borders of all the land.{16}

[12] Its foliage was attractive and its fruit plentiful;

on it there was food enough for all.

Under it the wild animals{17} used to seek shade,
and in its branches the birds of the sky used to nest.

All creatures{18} used to feed themselves from it.

[13] While I was watching in my mind's visions{19} on my bed,
a holy sentinel{20} came down from heaven.

[14] He called out loudly{21} as follows:{22}

'Chop down the tree and lop off its branches!

Strip off its foliage

and scatter its fruit!

Let the animals flee from under it

and the birds from its branches!

[15] But leave its taproot{23} in the ground,
with a band of iron and bronze around it{24}
surrounded by the grass of the field.

Let it become damp with the dew of the sky,
and let it live with{25} the animals in the grass of the land.

[16] Let his mind{26} be altered from that of a human being,
and let an animal's mind be given to him,
and let seven periods of time{27} go by for{28} him.

[17] This announcement is by the decree of the sentinels;
this decision is by the pronouncement of the holy ones,
so that{29} those who are alive may understand
that the Most High has authority over human kingdoms,{30}
and he bestows them on whomever he wishes.

He establishes over them even the lowliest of human beings.’

[18] “This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its^{31} interpretation, for none of the wise men in^{32} my kingdom are able to make known to me the interpretation. But you can do so, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

Daniel 4:1-18 NET

{1} 4:1 sn Beginning with 4:1, the verse numbers through 4:37 in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Aramaic text (BHS), with 4:1 ET = 3:31 AT, 4:2 ET = 3:32 AT, 4:3 ET = 3:33 AT, 4:4 ET = 4:1 AT, etc., through 4:37 ET = 4:34 AT. Thus Dan 3:31-33 of the Aramaic text appears as Dan 4:1-3 in the English Bible, and the corresponding verses of ch. 4 differ accordingly. In spite of the division of the Aramaic text, a good case can be made that 3:31-33 AT (= 4:1-3 ET) is actually the introduction to ch. 4.

{2} 4:1 tn Aram “May your peace increase!”

{3} 4:3 tn Aram “his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.”

{4} 4:4 sn This verse marks the beginning of chap. 4 in the Aramaic text of Daniel (see the note on 4:1). The Greek OT (LXX) has the following addition: “In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign he said.” This date would suggest a link to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. In general, the LXX of chapters 4-6 is very different from the MT, so much so that the following notes will call attention only to selected readings. In Daniel 4 the LXX lacks sizable portions of material in the MT (e.g., vv. 3-6, 31-32), includes sizable portions of material not in the MT (e.g., v. 14a, parts of vv. 16, 28), has a different order of some material (e.g., v. 8 after v. 9), and in some instances is vastly different from the MT (e.g., vv. 30, 34). Whether these differences are due to an excessively paraphrastic translation technique adopted for these chapters in the LXX, or are due to differences in the underlying Vorlage of the LXX, is a disputed matter. The latter seems more likely. There is a growing trend in modern scholarship to take the LXX of chapters 4-6 much more seriously than was the case in most earlier text-critical studies that considered this issue.

{5} 4:4 tn Aram “my house.”

{6} 4:4 tn Aram “happy.”

{7} 4:5 tn Aram “and it.”

{8} 4:6 tn Aram “from me there was placed a decree.”

{9} 4:6 tn The Aramaic infinitive here is active.

{10} 4:8 sn This explanation of the meaning of the name Belteshazzar may be more of a paronomasia than a strict etymology.

{11} 4:9 tc The present translation assumes the reading ܚܙܝܐ (khazi, “consider”) rather than the MT ܚܙܝܢ (khezvey, “visions”). The MT implies that the king required Daniel to disclose both the dream and its interpretation, as in chapter 2. But in the following verses Nebuchadnezzar recounts his dream, while Daniel presents only its interpretation.

{12} 4:10 tc The LXX lacks the first two words (Aram “the visions of my head”) of the Aramaic text.

{13} 4:10 tn Instead of “in the middle of the land,” some English versions render this phrase “a tree at the center of the earth” (NRSV); NAB, CEV “of the world”; NLT “in the middle of the earth.” The Hebrew phrase can have either meaning.

{14} 4:10 tn Aram “its height was great.”

{15} 4:11 tn Aram “its sight.” So also v. 17.

{16} 4:11 tn Or “to the end of all the earth” (so KJV, ASV); NCV, CEV “from anywhere on earth.”

{17} 4:12 tn Aram “the beasts of the field.”

{18} 4:12 tn Aram “all flesh.”

{19} 4:13 tn Aram “the visions of my head.”

{20} 4:13 tn Aram “a watcher and a holy one.” The expression is a hendiadys; so also in v. 23. This “watcher” is apparently an angel. The Greek OT (LXX) in fact has ἄγγελος (angelo, “angel”) here. Theodotion simply transliterates the Aramaic word (ʿir). The term is sometimes rendered “sentinel” (NAB) or “messenger” (NIV, NLT).

{21} 4:14 tn Aram “in strength.”

{22} 4:14 tn Aram “and thus he was saying.”

{23} 4:15 tn Aram “the stock of its root.” So also v. 23. The implication here is that although the tree is chopped down, it is not killed. Its life-giving root is spared. The application to Nebuchadnezzar is obvious.

{24} 4:15 sn The function of the band of iron and bronze is not entirely clear, but it may have had to do with preventing the splitting or further deterioration of the portion of the tree that was left after being chopped down. By application it would then refer to the preservation of Nebuchadnezzar’s life during the time of his insanity.

{25} 4:15 tn Aram “its lot be.”

{26} 4:16 tn Aram “its heart.” The metaphor of the tree begins to fade here and the reality behind the symbol (the king) begins to emerge.

{27} 4:16 sn The seven periods of time probably refer to seven years.

{28} 4:16 tn Aram “over” (also in vv. 23, 25, 32).

{29} 4:17 tc The present translation follows an underlying reading of *עַל־דִּבְרַת* (*‘al-divrat*, “so that”) rather than MT *עַד־דִּבְרַת* (*‘ad-divrat*, “until”).

{30} 4:17 tn Aram “the kingdom of man”; NASB “the realm of mankind”; NCV “every kingdom on earth.”

{31} 4:18 tc The present translation reads *פִּשְׁרָה* (*pishreh*, “its interpretation”) with the Qere and many medieval Hebrew MSS; the Kethib is *פִּשְׁרָא* (*pishra’*, “the interpretation”); so also v. 16.

{32} 4:18 tn Aram “of.”

DANIEL INTERPRETS NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S DREAM

[19] Then Daniel (whose name is also Belteshazzar) was upset for a brief time;{33} his thoughts were alarming him. The king said, “Belteshazzar, don’t let the dream and its interpretation alarm you.” But Belteshazzar replied, “Sir,{34} if only the dream were for your enemies and its interpretation applied to your adversaries! [20] The tree that you saw that grew large and strong, whose top reached to the sky, and which could be seen{35} in all the land, [21] whose foliage was attractive and its fruit plentiful, and from which there was food available for all, under whose branches wild animals{36} used to live, and in whose branches birds of the sky used to nest - [22] it is you,{37} O king! For you have become great and strong. Your greatness is such that it reaches to heaven, and your authority to the ends of the earth. [23] As for the king seeing a holy sentinel coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its taproot in the ground, with a band of iron and bronze around it, surrounded by the grass of the field. Let it become damp with the dew of the sky, and let it live with the wild animals, until seven periods of time go by for him’ - [24] this is the interpretation, O king! It is the decision of the Most High that this has happened to my lord the king. [25] You will be driven{38} from human society,{39} and you will live{40} with the wild animals. You will be fed{41} grass like oxen,{42} and you will become damp with the dew of the sky. Seven periods of time will pass by for you, before{43} you understand that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms and gives them to whomever he wishes. [26] They said to leave the taproot of the tree, for your kingdom will be restored to you when you come to understand that heaven{44} rules. [27] Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you. Break away from your sins by doing what is right, and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps your prosperity will be prolonged.”{45}

[28] Now all of this happened{46} to King Nebuchadnezzar. [29] After twelve months, he happened to be walking around on the battlements{47} of the royal palace of Babylon. [30] The king uttered these

words: “Is this not the great Babylon that I have built for a royal residence{48} by my own mighty strength{49} and for my majestic honor?” [31] While these words were still on the king’s lips,{50} a voice came down from heaven: “It is hereby announced to you,{51} King Nebuchadnezzar, that your kingdom has been removed from you! [32] You will be driven from human society, and you will live with the wild animals. You will be fed grass like oxen, and seven periods of time will pass by for you before{52} you understand that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms and gives them to whomever he wishes.”

[33] Now in that very moment{53} this pronouncement about{54} Nebuchadnezzar came true.{55} He was driven from human society, he ate grass like oxen, and his body became damp with the dew of the sky, until his hair became long like an eagle’s feathers, and his nails like a bird’s claws.{56}

[34] But at the end of the appointed time{57} I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up{58} toward heaven, and my sanity returned to me.

I extolled the Most High,
and I praised and glorified the one who lives forever.

For his authority is an everlasting authority,
and his kingdom extends from one generation to the next.

[35] All the inhabitants of the earth are regarded as nothing.{59}

He does as he wishes with the army of heaven
and with those who inhabit the earth.

No one slaps{60} his hand
and says to him, ‘What have you done?’

[36] At that time my sanity returned to me. I was restored{61} to the honor of my kingdom, and my splendor returned to me. My ministers and my nobles were seeking me out, and I was reinstated{62} over my kingdom. I became even greater than before. [37] Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, for all his deeds are right and his ways are just. He is able to bring down those who live{63} in pride.

{33} 4:19 tn Aram “about one hour.” The expression refers idiomatically to a brief period of time of undetermined length.

{34} 4:19 tn Aram “my lord.”

{35} 4:20 tn Aram “its sight.”

{36} 4:21 tn Aram “the beasts of the field” (also in vv. 23, 25, 32).

{37} 4:22 sn Much of modern scholarship views this chapter as a distortion of traditions that were originally associated with Nabonidus rather than with Nebuchadnezzar. A Qumran text, the Prayer of Nabonidus, is often cited for parallels to these events.

{38} 4:25 tn The Aramaic indefinite active plural is used here like the English passive. So also in v. 28, 29, 32.

{39} 4:25 tn Aram “from mankind.” So also in v. 32.

{40} 4:25 tn Aram “your dwelling will be.” So also in v. 32.

{41} 4:25 tn Or perhaps “be made to eat.”

{42} 4:25 sn Nebuchadnezzar’s insanity has features that are associated with the mental disorder known as boanthropy, in which the person so afflicted imagines himself to be an ox or a similar animal and behaves accordingly.

{43} 4:25 tn Aram “until.”

{44} 4:26 sn The reference to heaven here is a circumlocution for God. There was a tendency in Jewish contexts to avoid direct reference to God. Cf. the expression “kingdom of heaven” in the NT and such statements as “I have sinned against heaven and in your sight” (Luke 15:21).

{45} 4:27 tn Aram “if there may be a lengthening to your prosperity.”

{46} 4:28 tn Aram “reached.”

{47} 4:29 tn The word “battlements” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied from context. Many English versions supply “roof” here (e.g., NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV); cf. NLT “on the flat roof.”

{48} 4:30 tn Aram “house.”

{49} 4:30 tn Aram “by the might of my strength.”

{50} 4:31 tn Aram “in the mouth of the king.”

{51} 4:31 tn Aram “to you they say.”

{52} 4:32 tn Aram “until.”

{53} 4:33 tn Aram “hour.”

{54} 4:33 tn Or “on.”

{55} 4:33 tn Aram “was fulfilled.”

{56} 4:33 tn The words “feathers” and “claws” are not present in the Aramaic text, but have been added in the translation for clarity.

{57} 4:34 tn Aram “days.”

{58} 4:34 tn Aram “lifted up my eyes.”

{59} 4:35 tc The present translation reads כֶּלָּא (kéla’), with many medieval Hebrew MSS, rather than כֶּלָּה (kélah) of BHS.

{60} 4:35 tn Aram “strikes against.”

{61} 4:36 tc The translation reads הִדְרַת (hadret, “I returned”) rather than the MT הִדְרִי (hadri, “my honor”); cf. Theodotion.

{62} 4:36 tc The translation reads הִתְקַנַּת (hotqénet, “I was established”) rather than the MT הִתְקַנַּת (hotqénat, “it was established”). As it stands, the MT makes no sense here.

{63} 4:37 tn Aram “walk.”

Questions

1. Chapter 4 is essentially a declaration by Nebuchadnezzar. Who is it to? What does it declare? Why did he make it?
2. 4:37 - At the end of the declaration, Nebuchadnezzar reveals what his issue was. What was it?
3. 4:9-18 - Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. What are the key parts of this dream? Who are the "watchers" (ESV) and why are they part of this (v24)?
4. 4:17 - The dream includes an "edict" (judgment). Whose edict is it? What is the purpose of the edict?

5. Daniel interprets the dream. What are the key parts of the interpretation?

6. 4:19 - When Daniel understood the meaning of the dream, he was alarmed. Why? How did he respond?

7. How do you respond when facing the task of telling/confronting someone with something that is hard to say?

8. 4:27 - When Daniel was finished telling Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation, what counsel did he give to him? Did Nebuchadnezzar follow this counsel? How do we know?

9. 4:28-33 - Does the edict in the dream ever get enacted? What triggers it?

10. 4:34 – 35 - At the end of the “seven periods of time”, what happens to Nebuchadnezzar?

11. 4:36 – 37 - Once his right mind is restored, what happens to Nebuchadnezzar? What do we learn about the grace of God from this?

12. 4:37 - What does Nebuchadnezzar ultimately state about God? About himself?

13. What should we learn (as an individual) from this event in the life of Nebuchadnezzar? As a nation?

14. In what areas of your life are you like Nebuchadnezzar?

15. How does one become a humble person?