

Daniel 4

Verses 1- 2

Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and *populations of all languages who live in all the earth*: “May your peace be great! ² I am pleased to declare the signs and miracles that the Most High God has done for me.

Nebuchadnezzar was proud to tell all of the people of his kingdom about the miracles that God had performed for him. The first sign was a prophesy concerning the four future kingdoms of the world and the kingdom of God. The second sign was a demonstration of God’s ability to save and protect His people. This third sign will demonstrate God’s ability to rule over the greatest kings and kingdoms of the world.

Verse 3

³ How great are His signs

And how mighty are His miracles!

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,

And His dominion is from generation to generation.

This Gentile king had received two very impressive miracles. The first miracle came in a dream that revealed future events, something only the God of gods could reveal. The second miracle took place in full view of his administration and it caused the king to send a message to his whole kingdom that any people or nation that spoke against the God of the Jews would suffer great loss and be put to death in a gruesome manner.

The king also says that God’s kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. He may not have understood that God was the only true God but it seems that what Daniel said in verse 44 of chapter 2 must have made an impact on the king.

See Daniel 2:44

⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

Most likely the king had no idea what form this new kingdom would take but he understood it would never be destroyed. To be fair to the king, the Jewish people of that time, including the prophets and writers of scripture, had no idea what form this new kingdom would take.

Verses 4 - 9

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and happy in my palace. ⁵ I saw a dream and it startled me; and *these appearances 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, so that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. ⁷ Then the soothsayer priests, the sorcerers, 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 'Belteshazzar, chief of the soothsayer priests, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no secret baffles you, tell *me* the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation.

⁵ I saw a dream and it startled me; and *these appearances as I lay* on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me.

In his 1st dream the king's spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. This time the dream startled him and kept alarming him.

⁶ So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon, so that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream.

This time the king was not as demanding as he was with the previous dream because he told the wise men the dream and just asked them to interpret it. It seems that Daniel was not available right away because the king called on all the wise men of Babylon.

⁷ Then the soothsayer priests, the sorcerers, the Chaldeans, and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me.

One has to wonder if the wise men were unable to interpret the dream or if they were simply unwilling to do so because they knew it was bad news?

In any case, after this Daniel came in and the king related the dream to him. This is recorded in verses 10 thru 18.

Verses 10 - 18

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 middle 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 animals of the field found shade under it,
And the birds of the sky lived in its branches,
And all living creatures fed 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,
Shake off its foliage and scatter its fruit;
Let the animals 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 animals in the grass of the earth.

¹⁶ Let his mind change from *that of* a human
And let an animal’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 He grants it to whomever He wishes
And sets over it the lowliest of people.”

¹⁸ This is the dream *that I*, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell *me* its interpretation, since none of the wise men of my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, because a spirit of the holy gods is in you.’

All of this will be explained by Daniel in the following verses.

Verses 19

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.’ Belteshazzar replied, ‘My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you, and its interpretation to your adversaries!**

Telling the king the interpretation of this dream wasn't easy for Daniel but he was willing to stand up and tell the truth even when it was difficult. Daniel knew the new was not good and he warns the king by telling him he wished it applied to the king's enemies.

Verse 20 - 22

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 animals of the field lived and in whose branches the birds of the sky settled— 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.**

Good and evil men are represented as trees in the Psalms.

See Psalms 1:3

³ **He will be like a tree planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season,
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.**

See Psalms 37:35

³⁵ **I have seen a wicked, violent person
Spreading himself like a luxuriant tree in its native soil.**

Daniel would have been aware of this symbolism and it is likely that he made the connection between the king's dream and this symbolism.

King Nebuchadnezzar transformed the kingdom of Babylon into a great and mighty nation during his reign. He rebuilt temples, fortified the city with immense walls, and expanded the empire's power. He also built massive construction projects like the iconic Ishtar Gate and the legendary Hanging Gardens. More will be said about this a little later.

Verses 23 – 26

²³ And 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, let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the animals 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 animals 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 remain as yours after you recognize that *it is* Heaven *that* rules.

²³ And 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, let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the animals of the field until seven periods of time pass over him,

The message came from God thru a messenger, probably an angel and the message meant that the king will lose his kingship, but his life will be spared. However, he will experience a horrible condition in which he will lose his mind and literally live like an animal for a period of 7 years. This may be why the wise men played dumb and Daniel paused before he revealed what was about to happen. Concerning Daniel’s pause the Septuagint adds the following:

16 Then Daniel, whose name is Baltasar, was amazed about one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. <And the king answered and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation, trouble you.> And Baltasar answered and said, [My] lord, let the dream be to them that hate you, and the interpretation of it to your enemies.

²⁵ 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 remain as yours after you recognize that *it is* Heaven *that* rules.

It goes without saying that the king had a problem with pride and this pride was recorded in verse 28.

²⁹ **Twelve months later he was walking on the *roof* of the royal palace of Babylon.**

³⁰ **The king began speaking and was saying, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?'**

When someone is elevated to a very high position in life it has to multiply their temptations to think that what they have accomplished was done by their great ability and hard work. When anyone does this they have forgotten that God has given them whatever abilities they possess and He has opened the doors of opportunity that has come their way. The word of God says that pride cometh before the fall and anyone that doesn't give God the glory will suffer the consequences of their pride.

Verse 27

²⁷ **Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: wipe away your sin by doing righteousness, and your wrongdoings by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.'**

Daniel tells the king to repent of his sins, and that he should do what is right and show mercy to the poor. We can assume from this that the king was not doing these things.

Verses 28 - 33

²⁸ **"All of 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 began speaking and was saying, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?'**

³¹ **While the word was still 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 animals 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*.**

²⁸ ***“All of 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 began speaking and was saying, ‘Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?’***

One year after the king had seen the visions and Daniel had interpreted them, the king got caught up in his own greatness and bragged about his accomplishments.

³¹ ***While the word was still 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 animals 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.’***

God’s judgment came upon the king as he proclaimed how great he was and at that moment his kingship was removed from him. He would soon be dwelling with the animals of the field and this punishment would continue for 7 years. Apparently it took 7 years for the king to realize that God is the ruler over the kingdoms of mankind and that He gives it to whomever He wishes.

People often lavish praise on people who have great abilities and it is right to give honor to whom honor is due but it is also the obligation of those who receive such praise to thank God and praise Him for the blessing they have received. All of mankind must recognize that they are not great because of anything they have accomplished because God is the one who has given us life, our abilities, and the opportunities that come our way.

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.***

Most of us have heard the expression the bigger they are the harder they fall. The king’s fall from the kingship of the Babylonian Empire to an animal in the field has to be one of the worst falls in human history. Judas falling from being a disciple of Christ to the one that betrayed Him has to be number one. We should all pray that such a thing never happens to any of us or anyone we know.

Verses 34 - 36

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 of no account,

But He does according to His will among the army of heaven

And *among* the inhabitants of earth;

And no one can fend 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 honor of my kingdom, and my state counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me.

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.

When the king repented of his pride and gave the honor to God he was healed of his insanity and forgiven for his sin.

³⁵ All the inhabitants of the earth are of no account,

But He does according to His will among the army of heaven

And *among* the inhabitants of earth;

And no one can fend off His hand

Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’

All of mankind is nothing in comparison with God and that should humble all of us from our pride.

³⁶ **At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the honor of my kingdom, and my state counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me.**

We don't know for sure what "surprising greatness" was added to the King but one thing it might be referring to is the "Hanging Gardens of Babylon".

Josephus wrote that the king in order to please his wife erected a mountain in Babylon with trees, flowers, and waterfalls. It is now known as The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.

See video 405 The Hanging Gardens

<https://www.levickfamily.com/8.71.html>

Verse 37

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.**

God brought a pagan king, the greatest king of that time, to repentance and this gentile king praised God for His righteousness. This was also a sign to Israel that God was using the Gentile world to bring Israel to repentance.