

Daniel 4 - Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream

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Overview:

Actually written by Nebuchadnezzar... probably 20 years after he became King.

Daniel 4:1 NKJV - Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.

Daniel 4:2 NKJV - I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that **the Most High God has worked for me.**

Daniel 4:3 NKJV - How great [are] His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion [is] from generation to generation.

Daniel 4:4 NKJV - I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace.

Daniel 4:5 NKJV - I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

Daniel 4:6 NKJV - 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.

Daniel 4:7 NKJV - 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.

Daniel 4:8 NKJV - 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]:

KJV: But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, *saying*,

NLT: 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.)

Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible:

And in whom is the spirit of the holy gods - It is not easy to determine whom he meant by the holy gods. It would seem probable that this was such language as was dictated by the fact that he had been an idolater. He had been brought to feel that the God whom Daniel worshipped, and by whose aid he had been enabled to interpret the dream, was a true God, and was worthy of universal homage; but perhaps his ideas were still much confused, and he only regarded him as superior to all others, though he did not intend to deny the real existence of others. It might be true, in his apprehension, that there were other gods, though the God of Daniel was supreme, and perhaps he meant to say that the spirit of all the gods was in Daniel; that in an eminent degree he was the favorite of heaven, and that he was able to interpret any communication which came from the invisible world. It is perhaps unnecessary to observe here that the word spirit has no intended reference to the Holy Spirit. It is probably used with reference to the belief that the gods were accustomed to impart wisdom and knowledge to certain men, and may mean that the very spirit of wisdom and knowledge which dwelt in the gods themselves seemed to dwell in the bosom of Daniel.

DD - This was spoken by Nebuchadnezzar BEFORE his 7 years of madness. It was how he likely felt at that time.

Daniel 4:9 NKJV - "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.

Daniel 4:10 NKJV - "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.

Daniel 4:11 NKJV - The tree grew and became strong; Its height reached to the heavens, And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.

Daniel 4:12 NKJV - 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.

Daniel 4:13 NKJV - "I saw in the visions of my head [while] on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven.

Daniel 4:14 NKJV - 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.

Daniel 4:15 NKJV - 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.

Daniel 4:16 NKJV - 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.

Daniel 4:17 NKJV - '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.'

Daniel 4:18 NKJV - "This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, 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

Daniel 4:19 NKJV - Then Daniel, whose name [was] Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. [So] the king spoke, and said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, [may] the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!

NLT "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!"

From John Gill Commentary:

Belteshazzar answered and said, my lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies; which is as if he had said, I could have wished, had it been the will of God, that what is signified by the dream might have befallen not the king, but his enemies; this he said, not merely as a courtier, but as one that heartily wished and prayed for his peace and prosperity; and to show that he had no ill will to the king in the interpretation of the dream, but was his hearty faithful servant and minister; and yet suggests that something very dreadful and distressing was intended for him; and hereby he prepared him the better to receive it.

DD Could it also mean that the dream would please his enemies? But God ensured he kept his kingdom.

Daniel 4:20 NKJV - 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,

Daniel 4:21 NKJV - 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--

Daniel 4:22 NKJV - 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.

Daniel 4:23 NKJV - 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';

Seven times = seven years

Daniel 4:24 NKJV - this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king:

Daniel 4:25 NKJV - 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.

Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible:

*That they shall drive thee from men - That is, thou shalt be driven from the habitations of men; from the place which thou hast occupied among men. The prophet does not say "who" would do this, but he says that it "would" be done. The language is such as would be used of one who should become a maniac, and be thrust out of the ordinary society in which he had moved. The Greek of Theodotion here is: καὶ σὲ ἐκδιώξουσιν καὶ σε ἐκδιῶχουσιν. The Codex Chisianus has, "And the Most High and his angels shall run upon thee - κατατρέχουσιν katatrechousin - leading thee into prison," or into detention - εἰς φυλακὴν eis phulakēn - "and shall thrust thee into a desert place." **The general sense is, that he would be in such a state as to be treated like a beast rather than a man; that he would be removed from his ordinary abodes, and be a miserable and neglected outcast.***

Daniel 4:26 NKJV - 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.

God showing that He is in charge of who rules.

Daniel 4:27 NKJV - 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."

NLT: "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."

Break off (stop sinning) = H6562 = per-ak'; (Aramaic) corresponding to [H6561](#); to discontinue:—break off. **The KJV translates Strong's H6562 in the following manner: [break off](#) (1x).**

Daniel 4:28 NKJV - All [this] came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 4:29 NKJV - At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon.

Daniel 4:30 NKJV - 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?"

Daniel 4:31 NKJV - 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!

Daniel 4:32 NKJV - 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."

Daniel 4:33 NKJV - 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].

Daniel 4:34 NKJV - 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.

Daniel 4:35 NKJV - 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?"

Daniel 4:36 NKJV - 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.

Daniel 4:37 NKJV - 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.

From BibleHub.com Daniel Chapter 4 Summary:

<https://biblehub.com/chaptersummaries/daniel/4.htm>

Teaching Points

[Nebuchadnezzar's Dream](#)

The chapter begins with Nebuchadnezzar recounting a troubling dream of a great tree that is cut down, leaving only the stump. This dream symbolizes his impending downfall due to pride. ([Daniel 4:10-17](#))

Daniel's Interpretation

Daniel, known for his wisdom and ability to interpret dreams, explains that the tree represents Nebuchadnezzar himself. His kingdom will be taken from him until he acknowledges God's sovereignty. ([Daniel 4:19-27](#))

Fulfillment of the Dream

Despite the warning, Nebuchadnezzar's pride leads to his downfall. He is driven away from men and lives like an animal until he recognizes God's rule. ([Daniel 4:28-33](#))

Restoration and Praise

After acknowledging God's dominion, Nebuchadnezzar's sanity and kingdom are restored. He praises God, recognizing His eternal sovereignty. ([Daniel 4:34-37](#))

Practical Applications:

Guard Against Pride

Just as Nebuchadnezzar's pride led to his downfall, we must be vigilant against pride in our own lives, recognizing that all we have is from God.

Acknowledge God's Sovereignty

Regularly remind yourself of God's ultimate authority over all creation, including your own life and circumstances.

Heed Warnings

Be attentive to the warnings God places in your life, whether through Scripture, wise counsel, or circumstances, and respond with humility and obedience.

Praise and Testimony

Like Nebuchadnezzar, use your experiences to testify to God's greatness and share His work in your life with others.

Additional Resources:

UCG Bible Commentary on Daniel 4

<https://www.ucg.org/learn/bible-commentary/beyond-today-bible-commentary-daniel/daniel-4>

UCG Bible Study Series "Lessons From the Prophet Daniel - The Most High Rules". Video and transcript:

<https://www.ucg.org/course/video-bible-study-series/lessons-prophet-daniel/lessons-prophet-daniel-most-high-rules>

YouTube Video by The Bible Reveals on Nebuchadnezzar's 7 years of Madness

https://youtu.be/nNDU_ohRI5Q?si=k0_1bLiJPih5weh



The true reason why God transformed King Nebuchadnezzar into an animal