

Dan. 4:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

Dan. 4:2 I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.

Dan. 4:3 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.

In this chapter (about 30 years since the last chapter per Focht) the king publishes a declaration that he wants all of those in his kingdom to read. He has experienced a great humbling at the hand of God and wants to honor God by sharing his testimony. Verse 8 tells me that (at least at the time of the dream) he still did not believe in God as the one and only God, but he had come to believe that Daniel's God was the most powerful of gods. Nebuchadnezzar was convinced again of the power of God through the interpretation of another dream.

No time reference is given, but the events related appear to have happened closer to the end of his 43-year reign according to [The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#).

It would seem that the signs and wonders being referenced in this proclamation were a direct reference to the dream he relates and its fulfillment. I guess it could also include his memories regarding the first dream that Daniel interpreted for him as related in chapter two as well as the incident of the fiery furnace in chapter 3.

At this point in time as he gives his testimony, Nebuchadnezzar is convinced that the God of the Jews controls an everlasting kingdom, a kingdom that is far greater than any earthly kingdom.

Dan. 4:4 I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace:

Dan. 4:5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

The king begins to relate his story. Everything was going great in the king's life. One night when the king was sleeping, he had a dream that made him fearful and caused him uneasiness of mind. The next verses indicate that he thought the dream was a specific message to him, but he could not figure out what that message was.

Dan. 4:6 Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.

Dan. 4:7 Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

As in the events of chapter two, the king again calls in all the wise men of Babylon to interpret his dream—the magicians (horoscopists), astrologers (conjurers), Chaldeans (Magi—priests, philosophers, magicians) and the soothsayers (those who tell the future). This time the king tells his wise men the dream. It didn't help; none of them could interpret the dream. Again, for some reason Daniel wasn't with the original gathering.

Dan. 4:8 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*,

Dan. 4:9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

Finally, Daniel comes before the king. He verifies that it is the same Daniel that was renamed Belteshazzar (in honor of the king's god). The king identifies Daniel as one who possesses the spirits of the holy gods (not an acknowledgement of THE God). The king tells Daniel the dream and expresses his confidence in Daniel's ability to interpret the dream since he has already proven that he is the "master" of the magicians, the very best and wisest of all the wise men.

The dream is as follows:

Dan. 4:10 Thus *were* the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof *was* great.

Dan. 4:11 The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

Dan. 4:12 The leaves thereof *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

Dan. 4:13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;

Dan. 4:14 He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

Dan. 4:15 Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts in the grass of the earth:

Dan. 4:16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.

Dan. 4:17 This matter *is* by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

Dan. 4:18 This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise *men* of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou *art* able; for the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee.

The king lets Daniel know that he has told him the whole dream, and he wants Daniel to interpret it for him. He is certain that Daniel has ability that none of his other wise men possess because he possesses the very spirit of the holy gods (and he had already exhibited his ability in the dream of the great image as proof). It sounds like he is equating Daniel with the gods or maybe just as a man especially chosen by the gods to bless with their favor.

I believe along with Calvin that the watchers and holy ones reference a heavenly council of angels. He makes the following observations on this section of scripture.

“...the angels urge God by their prayers to humble all mortals and to exalt himself alone. Thus, whatever obscures his glory may be reduced into order. It is right for angels constantly to desire this, since we know them to desire nothing in comparison with the adoration of God by themselves in alliance with all mankind. But when they see God’s authority diminished by man’s pride and audacity, the object of their demand is that God would reduce under his yoke the proud who erect their crests against him.... Angels seek from God by continual prayers to declare his own power to mortals, and thus to lay prostrate the proud who think to excel by their own power and industry, or else by chance, or by the help of men.”

I believe that these “watchers” and “holy ones” are the same as those referenced in Daniel 7 and Revelation 4.

*Daniel 7:9–10 “I beheld till the **thrones** were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.”*

*Revelation 4:4 “And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw **four and twenty elders sitting**, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.”*

Dan. 4:19 Then Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream *be* to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

“astonied” = to stun (or intransitively, grow numb), i.e. devastate or (figuratively) stupefy (both usually in a passive sense):—make amazed...

After hearing the dream, Daniel was speechless for one hour. He was probably trying to figure out how he was going to interpret the dream for the king in a respectful way or a way in which the king wouldn't take his anger out on Daniel. Finally, the king's patience begins to grow thin. He could tell by Daniel's expression that Daniel was troubled by the dream. The king tries to comfort Daniel and tells him not to be alarmed or anxious about telling the king the interpretation of the dream. So Daniel begins. He tells the king that the dream is one that will make his enemies happy.

Dan. 4:20 The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;

Dan. 4:21 Whose leaves *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:

Dan. 4:22 It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

Dan. 4:23 And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;

Dan. 4:24 This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

Dan. 4:25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

Dan. 4:26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

The very tall (whose height reached to heaven), strong tree that was rich in fruit (plenty for all in his kingdom) and provided shade to the beasts of the field and homes to the birds represented the king as a ruler who was very great, almost as great as a god in the eyes of his people (reached unto heaven) and whose authority covered most of the known world.

The *watcher/holy one* is an expression for an angel or a messenger from heaven (the home of God). The angel comes and gives direction (to whom?) for the tree to be cut down and destroyed, but the stump was to be left in the ground. A band of iron and brass was to be placed around the stump and the grass of the field allowed to grow around it. The stump (the afflicted king) is to live as an animal in the field for seven years. This would indicate that the affliction affected his mind, and he was not able to reason or form thoughts with understanding.

At this point, Daniel emphasizes that this interpretation/instruction has been given by the most High (God).

God has decreed that King Nebuchadnezzar will be driven from men and live as a beast in the field and eat grass like an ox (a condition called boanthropy). He will live outside where he gets wet from the dew for seven years. At the end of that time the king will know that the most High (God) is the ruler of men, and He gives authority to men of His choosing.

The good news is that the stump represents the fact that Neb's kingdom will not be taken away from him for good. (This is a miracle in and of itself; there is always someone looking to assume authority/power.) Once the king recognizes that the God of heaven is THE authority, his kingdom will be restored to him. God knows the end from the beginning, and He is telling the king that he will humble himself and learn the lesson that God is teaching him. He will not harden his heart as so many are wont to do.

Dan. 4:27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

Daniel urges the king to listen to his advice. He encourages the king to give up his sinful lifestyle and live righteously (according to God's standards). Instead of acting wickedly toward others, start acting mercifully to the poor. I think Daniel is saying that the king should show respect to all people no matter what their status in society might be. If he changes his ways, then God might prolong the time of his health and sanity. Interestingly enough, Daniel doesn't suggest that God might change His mind. Nebuchadnezzar is a powerful king and would not respect that kind of "god"; he would only understand an authority that is forthright and true to His word.

Dan. 4:28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

Dan. 4:29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

Dan. 4:30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

The king basically states that Daniel was right; everything happened according to the interpretation given to Daniel by his God.

Verse 29 indicates that a year after having the dream and receiving its interpretation, the king was walking around his palace in Babylon and contemplating with pleasure the greatness of his kingdom. He was deceived into thinking that he was the one responsible for the position of honor and power that he enjoyed. He had accomplished this through his own strength and deserved great honor for making his kingdom great and powerful. He was filled with pride.

Dan. 4:31 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.

Dan. 4:32 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.

Dan. 4:33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' *feathers*, and his nails like birds' *claws*.

Before the king had even finished speaking, he heard a voice from heaven speaking to him. He was told that his kingdom was being taken away from him. For seven years he would live like a beast in the field; he would eat grass. At the end of that seven years Neb would finally understand that the most High (God) is THE authority in the kingdom of men; He is the one that makes/ allows kings/kingdoms to become great. That same hour the king was afflicted as God had foretold in the dream. He was driven from men, he ate grass like an ox, he lived outside and was wet from the dew, and his hair and nails grew long. Imagine what hair that grew for seven years and was never combed would look like or nails that were never cut and grew and curled.

Dan. 4:34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation:

Dan. 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

At the end of the seven years, Neb lifted up his eyes to heaven and his understanding returned to him; he was healed. He praised the most High (God), the One that lives forever, Whose kingdom never ends but continues on through the generations of men on earth. He acknowledged that the strongest and mightiest of men are as nothing compared to strength and power of the most High (God). He recognized that God acts in the affairs of men as He so chooses.

I would like to think that Nebuchadnezzar came to saving faith. The terminology used here makes me think that he no longer considers the most High a god among other gods, but as THE GOD; however, I don't think we can know for sure this side of heaven.

Dan. 4:36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

Dan. 4:37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

When he regained his sanity, he was restored to his position of power and authority as a happy, healthy man. He was again honored by his counselors and princes. If anything, he was honored even more than before his illness. For this reason Neb wants all to know that he praises and honors the King of heaven; the One whose works are true and His ways/actions are just/right. Anyone who gets too prideful is subject to being humbled by the King of heaven. This is basically an admission of guilt by the king and an acknowledgement that his punishment had been just and deserved.

That is a very important lesson for us all to learn. God hates the sin of pride.

Psalm 12:3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things:

Proverbs 6:16-17 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look...

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Isaiah 13:11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

It's really perplexing to try and reason why the Lord would allow certain people throughout history to rise to positions of power and authority. Through the many examples we see in the scripture, we have to understand that God in His wisdom (not ours) is accomplishing His purposes and His plan—for the salvation and spiritual growth of His people (both of the old and new covenants), to fulfill the scripture in every detail and to fulfill the promise made to Abraham and His Son as stated in Galatians.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.