

## Chapter 4

### “The Humbling of Nebuchadnezzar”

#### Summary

- A proclamation of Nebuchadnezzar
- Contains the tale of how Nebuchadnezzar was humbled by God

#### Outline

- I. Prologue - vs. 1-3
- II. The troubling dream - vs. 4-7
- III. Daniel is brought to interpret the dream - vs. 8-9
- IV. The vision of the Great Tree - vs. 10-16
- V. Daniel interprets the dream - vs. 17-27
- VI. The fulfillment of the dream - vs. 28-33
- VII. The restoration of Nebuchadnezzar - vs. 34-37

#### Notes

- vs. 7-8 - Nebuchadnezzar exhausts every resource before calling on Daniel
- vs. 9 - “master of the magicians” is used to denote Daniel’s excellence over the other learned men in the kingdom
- vs. 13 - watcher = angel
- vs. 19 - the terrible interpretation (and probably delivering it to its target) makes Daniel silent
- vs. 19 - “to them that hate thee”, etc. - the interpretation is bad
- vs. 27 - Daniel is calling on Nebuchadnezzar to repent before judgment comes
- vs. 29 - 12 months later all is fulfilled. God’s justice is not always swift, but it is sure.
- vs. 30 - Nebuchadnezzar’s downfall was pride - Proverbs 16:18
- vs. 30 - looking around from his great palace, Nebuchadnezzar could see many building projects completed under his command, possibly including the Hanging Gardens.
- vs. 33 - it is theorized by some that while in this state Nebuchadnezzar was hidden away and protected while his advisers controlled the empire.

#### Interpreting the Dream

- The tree represents Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom, great and powerful, covering so much of the ancient world - vs. 22
- The tree is cut down, leaving the stump. The kingdom is removed, but not the king’s life.
- The stump of the king’s life, a reminder of his former glory, is bound by insanity
- The king would live as a wild beast - vs. 25
- “till seven times pass over” - not sure seven years, months etc.
- The king is restored, the purpose in leaving the stump to grow again - vs. 36

### Nebuchadnezzar's Spiritual Progression

- 1:19-20 - appreciating God's servants
- 2:47 - "God is a God of gods", "Lord of kings", revealer of secrets
- 3:25 - sees the "Son of God" in the furnace
- 3:28 - blesses the God who delivered from the furnace
- 3:29 - acknowledges the power of God
- 4:2 - "high God"
- 4:3 - acknowledging God's greatness and sovereignty
- 4:34-35 - "most High", acknowledging God's greatness and sovereignty
- 4:37 - "King of heaven"
- Though he definitely grew in knowledge of and respect for God, there are many theologians who do not believe he was saved.

### How Strange Was Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity?

- Not to take away from God's working, but there could be a psychological diagnosis for Nebuchadnezzar's actions.
- Clinical Lycanthropy
- Wikipedia - "a rare psychiatric syndrome that involves a delusion that the affected person can transform into, has transformed into, or is a non-human animal."
- Technically, it would be *boanthropy* or *zoanthropy*.
- Raymond Harrison in *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 1116-17:
  - A great many doctors spend an entire, busy professional career without once encountering an instance of the kind of monomania described in the book of Daniel. The present writer, therefore, considers himself particularly fortunate to have actually observed a clinical case of boanthropy in a British mental institution in 1946. The patient was in his early 20's, who reportedly had been hospitalized for about five years. His symptoms were well-developed on admission, and diagnosis was immediate and conclusive. He was of average height and weight with good physique, and was in excellent bodily health. His mental symptoms included pronounced anti-social tendencies, and because of this he spent the entire day from dawn to dusk outdoors, in the grounds of the institution ... His daily routine consisted of wandering around the magnificent lawns with which the otherwise dingy hospital situation was graced, and it was his custom to pluck up and eat handfuls of the grass as he went along. On observation he was seen to discriminate carefully between grass and weeds, and on inquiry from the attendant the writer was told the diet of this patient consisted exclusively of grass from hospital lawns. He never ate institutional food with the other inmates, and his only drink was water... The writer was able to examine him cursorily, and the only physical abnormality noted consisted of a lengthening of the hair and a coarse, thickened condition of the finger-nails. Without institutional care, the patient would have manifested precisely the same physical conditions as those mentioned in Daniel 4:33... From the foregoing it seems evident that the author of the fourth chapter of Daniel was describing accurately an attestable, if rather rare, mental affliction.