

Daniel: Chapter 4
(God- the Humbler of the proud)

Chapter 4:1-37: Nebuchadnezzar is humbled.

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.

- Bragging or grateful? Sometimes people say complimentary things about others only to, in a round-about way, compliment themselves through association.

"The king doesn't understand all he is saying; he speaks more than he knows but that doesn't keep him from speaking". See also Pro 27:14.

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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.

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.

- *"For all his mighty armies, he couldn't keep dreams from successfully invading his bedroom".*

As in chapter 2, he brings in his phony advisors and even after telling them the dream they are impotent and helpless. Maybe the only reason he kept them around was to feed his own ego by seeing them humbled in fear.

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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.

- As governor over the others (2:48) Daniel was, as would have been the custom (*Matthew Henry*), the last to be consulted. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, advised Moses concerning this very thing.

Exo 18:22 And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, **that every great matter** they shall bring unto thee, but **every small matter** they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear *the burden* with thee. (*Emp. added*)

The king would not have summoned Daniel until he ran out of his other more "inferior" options.

- according to the name of my god- Nebuchadnezzar obviously still didn't quite get it. He was a polytheist.

"That is, the name of my god Bel, or Belus, is incorporated in the name given to him. This is referred to here, probably, to show the propriety of thus invoking his aid; because he bore the name of the god whom the monarch had adored." Albert Barnes

Even the Israelites named their children after the true God. Daniel in the Hebrew language means (*Heb.1840*) "judge of God" or "God's judge". El is the Hebrew word for God. The following, among many others, were names given to the children of the Israelites.

Exo 6:23 And Aaron took him Elisheba (*Heb.472-God of [the] oath.*), daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar (*Heb.499-God [is] helper.*), and Ithamar.

- spirit of the holy gods- Here- πνευμα^{G4151} (spirit) θεου^{G2316} (gods) αγιου^{G40} (holy)

Whereas in verse 2- θεος^{G2316} (God) ο^{G3588} (the) υψιστος^{G5310} (highest, Supreme)

Septuagint

... "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." Albert Barnes

This phrase is used in 4:8, 9, 18; 5:11 and in each case the context is the same which determines the meaning.

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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.

- The king's nightmare.

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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:

- watcher-

H5894 עֵיר eer

(Chaldee); from a root corresponding to H5782; a *watcher*, that is, an **angel** (as guardian): - watcher.

- The watcher made a command to disrupt this life sustaining wonder. To the king the tree was so grand that he became disturbed that it should be cut down.

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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:

- Not all was lost. There remained a stump as though there was hope that the tree would one day again sustain the earth.

- band of iron and brass- "*like the guards they put around young trees today*".

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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.

- The tree is now a man in the dream. He is now as an herbivore. All of this will last for "seven times". (See notes in verse 25.)

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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.

- This was done to let the king know Who is in charge. As we find out he really did need to be taught a lesson in humility.

- basest-

H8215 שפל sh^ephal *shef-al'*

(Chaldee); from H8214; *low*: - basest.

H8214 שפל sh^ephal *shef-al'*

(Chaldee); corresponding to H8213: - abase, **humble**, put down, subdue.

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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.

- Here the king admitted the quacks couldn't help him. Was he trying to prove to them that he really didn't need their help and that he had a connection to a higher source? Was he showing them that their services could be in jeopardy? Again, he could have been flexing his ego.

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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.

- "Daniel and the king must have gotten on well for he doesn't wish to tell him the bad news". The king reassures Daniel that it's okay to reveal the interpretation. Daniel would rather the dream concern the king's enemies. Even if a message may be unpleasant, if it's from God, it needs to be spoken. (1 Sam 3:8-18; 4:12-18; Gal 4:16)

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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:

- The tree represents the king, the stump his kingdom.
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- leave the stump- "If the kingdom would have been lost to Nebuchadnezzar while he was humiliated it would have seemed to prove his point that his personal genius was necessary to the success of the reign". His humiliation, again, would last "seven times". It would take that amount of time to completely humble Nebuchadnezzar.

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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.

- drive thee from men- his dwelling would be among the wild donkeys (5:21). He would be sustained with grass as an ox.

- seven times- could mean seven years or "a period, indefinite in duration but long enough for the lesson to be learned". "The number seven in apocalyptic language, is used to speak of fullness, completeness so that 'seven times' means 'long enough' to put the message across". (Like the 1,000 year reign of Rev 20)

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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.

- After you learn your lesson, king, you can come back and rule again. Just remember Who set you up as king!

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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 tranquility.

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

- Repent. Turn your sins into right-ness and iniquities into acts of mercy and maybe you'll experience a lengthened period of peace. Whatever period, the king showed a response to the interpretation. But it was short lived.

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

- A year later..."*time destroys memory and the feeling of urgency*".

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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?

- For twelve months such pride "*had gone underground*". "A great ____ that I have built", said the evangelist, businessman, etc. Sometimes we need to get our "I's" checked when we think we can do things on our own without giving God any credit for His help.

Jas 4:6 But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

Jas 4:15 For that ye *ought* to say, If **the Lord will**, we shall live, and do this, or that. (*Emp. added*)

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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.

- More than a voice fell. Whether the voice came from the throne room of God or from the sky like lightning, either one would signify that Nebuchadnezzar heard it. It caught his attention.

Pro 11:2 *When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.*

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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.

- "*Bragging one moment and munching the next*".

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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.

- Along with the change in menu came the desperate need for a haircut and manicure.

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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 forever, Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation:

- *"From the expression (lifted mine eyes unto heaven)...the king was mentally imbalanced and yet...he had knowledge of what was going on all the while he was being humiliated". His understanding returned.*

Psa 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: **a good understanding** have all they that do *His commandments*: His praise endures forever. (*Emp. added*)

- His kingdom is from generation to generation- Kingdoms of men come and go but God "was, and is, and is to come" (*Rev 4:8*).

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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?

- No one can stop God from doing things "*according to His will*". He has authority over the created beings of Heaven and over those on the earth. No one can prevent Him from executing His will or even has the right to question it.

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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.

- God could have caused Babylon to fall while Nebuchadnezzar was being humbled. But then Nebuchadnezzar could say then that it truly was he, himself who made Babylon great and she could not survive without him. "*Brilliance*" is not necessary at the head of a nation. God can keep anyone in charge through whom He ultimately rules so that His will be done. Even our enemies can God use to humble us.