

## I. The King Humbled by the Sovereign God (Daniel 4:1-37)

### A. Introduction

Nebuchadnezzar's first dream was recorded in chapter two and now in chapter four his second dream is described. As Daniel revealed, this second dream disclosed God's judgment on the Gentiles because of their pride, a point emphasized in 4:25, 4:37, and 5:20. This chapter emphasizes the fact that no man can set himself up against God, that God is the ruler in the kingdom of men, and that He is the blessed and only Sovereign.

The structure of the chapter is twofold: 1) verses that describe the time after the lesson had been learned (vs. 1-3 and 34-37); 2) verses that deal with the time before the lesson was learned (vs. 4-33).

Opening testimony: proclamation, first person (1-3)

Report of content of dream, first person (4-18)

Report of interpretation of dream (19-27)

Report of fulfilment of dream (28-33)

Closing testimony: restoration, first person (34-37)<sup>110</sup>

Nebuchadnezzar had previously recognized God as "the Most High God" (3:26). He had seen God at work in chapter one in honoring Daniel and his friend's commitment to not eat the king's food. He had seen God at work in chapter two in giving Daniel the meaning of his dream (2:28, 47). He had seen God at work in chapter three in delivering the three men from the fiery furnace (3:28). But he had not yet submitted himself to the greatness and sovereignty of "the Most High God." So, Daniel 4 contains Nebuchadnezzar's first-person personal account (included and possibly edited by Daniel) of being humbled by the Lord. It is a tale of two sovereigns: an earthly one and a heavenly one, a proud one and a holy one, a finite one and an infinite one.

So impacted was Nebuchadnezzar with God's sovereign power that three times he repeated the fact that God rules over the kingdom of men (4:17, 25, 32), the primary lesson he came to learn in this chapter. In fact, verses 3 and 34 form an *inclusio* (with inverted parallelism) that highlights the point of this chapter:

- Vs. 3 ~ His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom And His dominion is from generation to generation.
- Vs. 34 ~ For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom *endures* from generation to generation

"The stress then in Daniel 2 is that God reveals, in chapter 3 that he rescues, and in chapter 4 that he rules. Daniel 4 hammers home the point that *God rules the kingdom of men and human rulers serve only at his pleasure.*"<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Davis 2013: 60.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 60.

Most likely this dream occurred toward the end of Nebuchadnezzar's reign as king. Knowing that he ruled for 43 years and that he was made like an animal for seven years and that he ruled on his throne for a short time after those events, he likely had this dream between the 30<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> year of his reign. Daniel would have been between 45 and 50 years old.

## B. Expository Notes

### 1. The Introduction to the King's Dream (vs. 1-3)

*Daniel 4:1-3 ~ Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound! 2 It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me. 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."*

- These verses should be placed with verses 34-37; in both passages, Nebuchadnezzar looks back and gives his testimony of fleshly pride and humbling by God.
- This was an official proclamation made by the king and circulated throughout his realm (vs. 1).
- Nebuchadnezzar considered himself the king of the earth because he did rule much of the then-known world.
- This was his kingdom and his proclamation went throughout his empire.
- He wanted the people of his kingdom to know that, through God's miraculous signs (a dream interpreted in chapter two, three men delivered from the fiery furnace in chapter three, and his sanity and kingdom restored to him in chapter four), he had learned of God's power, sovereignty, and entire control over all (vs. 2-3).
- Earlier, he believed it was his own power and wisdom that was the cause of his great rule but he learned that God rules according to His purposes and uses those He chooses as His instrument to accomplish those purposes.
- He has come to admit that, while his kingdom would eventually pass away, God's kingdom was perpetual.
- Even though he would enjoy a long and brilliant reign as king, he admitted that it was little in comparison with God's reign which is eternal.
- "Upon the lips of a pagan monarch, these affirmations concerning Israel's God are truly incredible. Yet it is understandable considering the many ways in which Yahweh had demonstrated his reality and power to Nebuchadnezzar and the constant witness of Daniel in the court."<sup>112</sup>

### 2. The Contents of the King's Dream (vs. 4-18)

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<sup>112</sup> Miller 1994: 130.

*Daniel 4:4 ~ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace.*

- Nebuchadnezzar backtracked to give the background for how he arrived at the stunning admission of verses 1-3.
- He was “at ease” meaning he was enjoying peace and prosperity as king over the entire world.
- He had spent decades making Babylon one of the most fabulous cities of the ancient world and he was enjoying the luxuries he thought he deserved.
- He was successful and secure on his throne, enjoying the golden years of his reign.
- He was “flourishing” (lit. “growing green” in Aramaic) in his palace.
- Everything was flourishing in his kingdom and he was enjoying it all, relishing in his success and the knowledge that there were no serious threats to his reign.
- “This must have occurred near the end of his long reign (605-562), for the great goal of his reign, the rebuilding of Babylon, was now accomplished (4:30).”<sup>113</sup>

*Daniel 4:5-9 I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and these fantasies 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, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the conjurers, 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 ‘O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell me the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation.’*

- Like his first dream (2:1), Nebuchadnezzar’s ease was shattered by this dream and he was greatly afraid and deeply alarmed by its contents (vs. 5).
- He summoned his normal cadre of advisors to help him understand it (vs. 6-7) but they were unable to provide an interpretation.
- Again, God raised up Daniel to interpret the dream (vs. 8).
- By this time, Nebuchadnezzar knew that Daniel was a trusted adviser as he had him by his side for 30-35 years.
- He came to respect him as a trustworthy aide and a man of character and wisdom.
- “Here is God’s gift to the pagan king, the conduit of light in the midst of his darkness and fears. Daniel is the kindness of God to Nebuchadnezzar in giving him truth and clarity in his dilemma.”<sup>114</sup>
- Twice he affirmed (vs. 8-9) that the “spirit of the holy gods” resided in Daniel.
- Likely, that is a reference to the pagan deities whom Nebuchadnezzar worshipped, especially since the queen (Dan 5:11) and Belshazzar (Dan 5:14) used the same phrase, both of whom clearly did not know or worship the true and living God.

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<sup>113</sup> Whitcomb 1985: 62.

<sup>114</sup> Davis 2013: 61.

- But, it may be possible to take it also as “Spirit of the Holy God,” possibly an acknowledgement by Nebuchadnezzar to the true God Daniel worshipped (cf. Joshua 24:19 where the same wording for “the holy God” occurs).
- It does still appear, however, that Nebuchadnezzar was still an idolater at this point since he referred to Daniel as the one “whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god” (vs. 8), an acknowledgement that he was still a worshipper of the Babylonian god Bel-Merodach whom Daniel was named after.

*Daniel 4:10-12 ~ 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 midst 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 beasts of the field found shade under it, And the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches, And all living creatures fed themselves from it.*

- Nebuchadnezzar saw in his vision a tree, large enough for birds to dwell in it, animals to shelter under it, and all living things to eat from it.
- “The tree evidently was centrally located in order to symbolize its position of supreme importance in relation to the rest of the earth.”<sup>115</sup>
- Trees were frequently used in ancient times to symbolize great rulers (Is 2:12-13; 10:34; Ezek 17:22; 31:3).
- At this point, Nebuchadnezzar likely felt pretty good about the dream knowing that the whole world was enjoying the abundance his kingdom provided.

*Daniel 4:13-15a ~ 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, Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit; Let the beasts 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;*

- “Nebuchadnezzar’s life had been observed by heaven and did not measure up to the standard of holiness set by the holy God. Therefore this messenger had been sent with a word of warning to the king.”<sup>116</sup>
- The angelic messenger brought a grim message, one stating that the tree was to be cut down, the branches were to be trimmed from the trunk, the leaves were to be stripped off, the fruit was to be scattered, and the animals and birds that found shelter under and in its branches were to flee.
- No wonder Nebuchadnezzar was frightened. The tree which he had identified with himself was to be destroyed.
- But a glimmer of hope exists in the midst of this grim vision: The iron and bronze band placed around the stump would protect it, ensuring the roots remained alive and suggesting the possibility that the tree might grow again.

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<sup>115</sup> Miller 1994: 132.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 133.

*Daniel 4:15b-16 ~ And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth. 16 Let his mind be changed from that of a man And let a beast's mind be given to him, And let seven periods of time pass over him.*

- The description changes here from a tree to a man represented by the tree (notice the references to “him/his” in verses 15b-16).
- The tree representing the man would be cut down and the man who once sheltered animals would himself turn into an animal (vs. 15-16).
- The angel said that his sanity would leave him and he would become demented, living among the animals, exposed to the elements, and living in the fields.
- He would even eat the grass of the field like an animal.
- This condition would continue for “seven periods of time,” likely referring to seven years.
- “[T]he word ‘time’ would be expected to designate some definite and well-known period of time such as days, weeks, months, or years. Since seven days, weeks, or even months seem to be too short a duration for the illness, it is reasonable to suppose that the time was seven years. As Wood explains, the idea is that ‘the full cycle of seasons, with all the changes in types of weather involved, would pass over the king seven times.’”<sup>117</sup>

*Daniel 4:17 ~ 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 bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men.”*

- Nebuchadnezzar had to learn that the Most High God is sovereign over earthly kingdoms!
- He rules over the kingdom of men, carries the final authority, and is judge in the affairs of men.
- Nebuchadnezzar should have known that he held his particular office only because God had permitted it.
- He should have known that any power he possessed had been delegated to him by God, who is the ultimate ruler of all.
- And this was meant to be a warning shot across his bow so that he might repent of his pride.

*Daniel 4:18 ~ This is the dream which I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell me its interpretation, inasmuch as none of the wise men of my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.’*

- The king summoned Daniel to interpret his dream.

### 3. The Interpretation of the Kings’ Dream (vs. 19-27)

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 135.

*Daniel 4:19 ~ 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!’*

- Initially, Daniel was taken aback and greatly shaken by the grim nature of the dream because it foretold of doom and destruction.
- Probably out of a heart of compassion, Daniel did not even want to tell Nebuchadnezzar the meaning of the dream and its sobering implications.
- But the king persuaded Daniel to tell him the interpretation.

*Daniel 4:20-22 ~ 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 beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged—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.*

- Daniel interpreted the dream and wisely began with the good news first.
- The tree represented Nebuchadnezzar’s greatness and his majesty as ruler of the world.
- His kingdom had become greater than any kingdom at that time.

*Daniel 4:23-25 ~ 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, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts 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 beasts 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.*

- The sobering reality of the king’s dream was that his kingdom would be cut down and it would come crashing to the ground.
- And Nebuchadnezzar himself would be reduced to a raving maniac.
- The fact that he would be dwell “with the beasts of the field and be given grass to eat like cattle” (vs. 25), might indicate a supernaturally-induced condition known as zoanthropy in which the person thinks of himself as an animal and begins to act like one.
- It has a number of variations such as lycanthropy (“wolf man”) and boanthropy (“cow/ox man”).
- In such cases, the person has delusions and vivid hallucinations of being an animal, including having physical traits of that animal and behaving like it.
- This condition usually begins as a sort of dream and then takes over a person entirely, eventually becoming a mania.

- R. K. Harrison observed a modern case of *boanthropy* in a British mental institution in 1946: “The patient was in his early 20s, who reportedly had been hospitalized for about five years...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 grass as he went along.”<sup>118</sup>

- To imagine what this would have been like, imagine the President of the United States becoming a raving maniac stuck out on the White House lawn and enclosed in a fence where everybody could see him crawling around on all fours and eating grass.
- Again, Nebuchadnezzar was afflicted with this humiliating condition until he came to recognize that the Most High is the ruler over the realm of mankind and that He bestows it on whomever He wishes (vs. 25).
- All this would happen to him to teach him that God establishes and removes kingdoms.
- He needed to learn that every kingdom is ultimately God’s kingdom and all who reign do so because God has placed them in that position.
- All who live must know that the Most High God is sovereign over earthly kingdoms!

*Daniel 4:26-27 ~ And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules. 27 Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.*

- There is a ray of hope for Nebuchadnezzar in that the stump was left, indicating that he would not die and that his kingdom would be restored upon his repentance.
- After seven years, he would be restored to his right mind and retain control of his kingdom upon learning his lesson.
- Daniel’s advice to Nebuchadnezzar was that he needed to repent of and break away from his sin of pride (vs. 27).
- Daniel urged Nebuchadnezzar to turn from his sinful pride and produce fruits of righteousness so that judgment could be averted.
- “Of course, Daniel’s counsel to the king was not a ‘plan of salvation,’ for neither Nebuchadnezzar nor anyone else could be saved by works. Salvation involves a personal experience with the living God with right living naturally flowing out of a changed life. However, temporal judgment may be avoided by correct living.”<sup>119</sup>

#### 4. The Fulfillment of the King’s Dream (vs. 28-33)

<sup>118</sup> Harrison 1969: 1116.

<sup>119</sup> Miller 1994: 139.

*Daniel 4:28-30 ~ All 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 reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'*

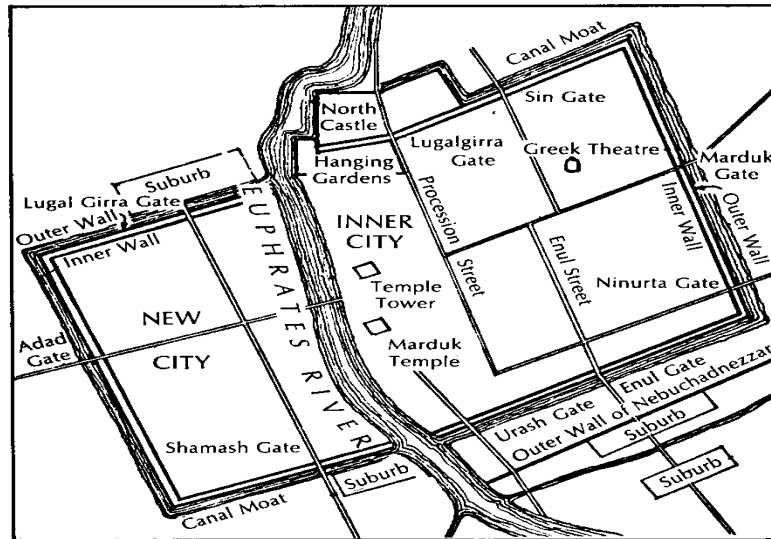
- God endured Nebuchadnezzar's pride for another 12 months.
  - This may have been a period of grace in which God was giving Nebuchadnezzar an opportunity to turn to Him in repentance.
  - But he didn't repent. Instead he presumed on the patience of God and hardened himself to the grace of God.
  - This is evident in the noticeable expressions of arrogance in verse 30: "I myself have built...by the might of my power...for the glory of my majesty."
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- At this time, the city of Babylon was at its height of glory.
  - It was a spectacular city which Nebuchadnezzar had indeed built.
  - He had plundered his enemies and brought their treasures to Babylon and used them to beautify his temples.
  - He had built an impressive capital city which was rectangular-shaped, surrounded by a water-filled moat, with double walls around the city, three palaces, over 50 temples, and a processional street 1000 yards long and 70 feet wide, paved with imported stones, and decorated on either side with elaborate bricks showing 120 lions and 575 dragons.
  - The outer wall of Babylon was 10 miles long and, according to the Greek historian Herodotus, was wide enough to enable a chariot driven by four horses to turn around on the top.
  - "At the north end of the city, near the Ishtar Gate, was Nebuchadnezzar's palace. His throne was 171 by 56 feet, having a 'triple gateway and a richly decorated façade of glazed bricks. Yellow columns whose superimposed Ionic capitals were crowned by palmettes were linked to each other by a garland of lotus buds.'"<sup>120</sup>
  - Adjacent to the temple of Marduk was the massive ziggurat *Etemenanki*. "This huge seen level ziggurat towered 288 feet into the air. A bridge (ca. four hundred feet long) spanned the Euphrates River and connected the east and west parts of the city...Nebuchadnezzar had at least three palaces in Babylon, the principal residence being located in the southern citadel and covering about 350 by 200 yards. This palace included a beautifully decorated throne room (described in the next chapter)."<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Whitcomb 1985: 66.

<sup>121</sup> Miller 1994: 141.





CITY PLAN OF ANCIENT BABYLON

- He built for his wife (Amytis) the famous Hanging Gardens which became one of the Seven wonders of the ancient world.
- He built them for her because she missed the green hills and valleys of her homeland.
- She was from the land of the Medes where the terrain was green, rugged, and mountainous.
- She apparently found the sun-baked terrain of Babylon depressing.
- So he decided to relive her depression by recreating her homeland through the building of an artificial mountain with rooftop gardens.
- He built a tremendous palace with high walls, supported by stone pillars, with numerous plants and trees at various levels.
- The Greek geographer Strabo, who described the gardens in the first century BC wrote, "It consists of vaulted terraces raised one above another, and resting upon cube-shaped pillars. These are hollow and filled with earth to allow trees of the largest size to be planted. The pillars, the vaults, and terraces are constructed of baked brick and asphalt. The ascent to the highest story is by stairs, and at their side are water engines, by means of which persons, appointed expressly for the purpose, are continually employed in raising water from the Euphrates into the garden."
- This method of watering the gardens was very sophisticated.
- Since Babylon rarely received rain, for the garden to survive, they would need a continuous supply of water.
- This meant determining a method for lifting the water into the various levels of the gardens so it could flow down through the terraces, watering the plants at each level.
- Some have speculated that this was accomplished by lifting water from the river either through chain pumps (where buckets on chains would be dipped into the water and brought to the upper level and dumped into an upper pool) or screw pumps

(where water in a trough that runs from a lower pool to an upper pool is pushed up by a tightly-fitting screw that turns in the trough).



- Nebuchadnezzar was basking in the greatness of all his architectural achievements, consumed with his own pitiful glory while at the same time rejecting God's weighty glory.
- His heart had become filled with pride.

*Daniel 4:31-33 ~ While the word was 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 beasts 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.*

- At the very moment Nebuchadnezzar boasted about his accomplishments, the judgment anticipated in his dream came to pass.
- "Frequently in Scripture God is said to bring judgment at the very moment blasphemous words issue from the mouths of His creatures."<sup>122</sup>
- The ruler of the world was reduced to an animal, banished away from people and forced to eat grass from the field.

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<sup>122</sup> Whitcomb 1985: 67.

- His hair, matted and coarse, become like a bird's feathers and his fingernails and toenails became like claws.
- "How ironic that the king who felt himself superior to other men had now sunk to a subhuman level."<sup>123</sup>
- The one who refused to honor God's glory lost his own glory.
- How far the mighty king fell.
- Only a humble acknowledgment that the Lord was God would restore him.
- The reason for God's judgment is stated for the third time in verse 32.

## 5. The Results of the King's Dream (vs. 34-37)

*Daniel 4:34-37 ~ 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 accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward 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 glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. 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.*

- After seven years of experiencing God's judgment, he finally took his eyes off himself and raised them toward heaven, having concluded at last that God's "dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation" (vs. 34).
- His reason returned to him and his kingdom was restored to him.

## C. Theological Notes

### 1. The Danger of Pride

- This chapter provides a graphic illustration of the fact that God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6-7).
- God alone is worthy of worship because He gives His glory to no one else (Is 42:8).
- What makes pride so deadly is that it usurps the place that God alone deserves and puts man in His place.
- As such, pride is a dethroning of God and a deification of self.
- For this reason, God hates pride (Prov 6:16-17).
- Pride always goes before destruction (Prov 16:18) and those who will not acknowledge God's sovereignty over them will be humbled (cf. Ezek 28:1-10; Acts 12:21-23).

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<sup>123</sup> Miller 1994: 142.

## 2. The Flimsiness of Human Governments

“If verse 17 is true, you must not be overly-impressed by human governments nor awed by human rulers. Human governments are interim arrangements that God appoints to fill space until the power and glory of Jesus’ kingdom. Human rulers, tyrannical or democratic, are God’s lackeys who have tenure only at his pleasure.”<sup>124</sup>

## 3. Was Nebuchadnezzar Saved?

- The language in chapters two and three calls into doubt an actual conversion:
  - 2:47 ~ The king answered Daniel and said, “Surely **your God** is **a** God of gods and **a** Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.”
  - 3:28-29 ~ Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, “Blessed be **the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego**, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against **the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego** shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.”
- Although he was brought to a place of humility before God and recognized Him as Lord, the point of this chapter is Nebuchadnezzar’s humiliation not necessarily his conversion.
- But perhaps a case could be made in chapter four that he finally submitted himself to the Lord and was genuinely converted:
  - The book shows a progress in his knowledge of God (2:47 → 3:28 → 4:34-35).
  - He spoke true words about the almighty power of the true God (4:34-35).
  - His testimony in 4:37, which reveals a change from simply acknowledging the God of Daniel and his three friends to actually worshipping Him, may indicate that he had been brought to the point of true salvation.
- If so, then chapter four represents his testimony.
- “In chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar reaches a new spiritual perspicacity. Prior to his experience of insanity, his confessions were those of a pagan whose polytheism permitted the addition of new gods, as illustrated in Daniel 2:47 and 3:28-29. Now Nebuchadnezzar apparently worships the King of heaven only. For this reason, his autobiography is truly remarkable and reflects the fruitfulness of Daniel’s influence upon him and probably of Daniel’s daily prayers for him. Certainly God is no

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<sup>124</sup> Davis 2013: 67.

respector of persons and can save the high and mighty in this world as well as the lowly.”<sup>125</sup>

- “Was Nebuchadnezzar genuinely converted by the Holy Spirit on this occasion? God’s people have pondered this question through the centuries. In the final analysis, of course, only God knows.”<sup>126</sup>
- While many think his conversion was genuine (Wood, Walvoord, Young), others reject such a notion (Calvin, Keil, Archer).

#### D. Preaching Helps

##### 1. Todd’s Outline

The Shocking Declaration (vs. 1-3)  
The Troubling Dream (vs. 4-18)  
The Sobering Description (vs. 19-27)  
The Humbling Discipline (vs. 28-33)  
The Stunning Difference (vs. 34-37)

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<sup>125</sup> Walvoord 1971: 112.

<sup>126</sup> Whitcomb 1985: 68.