

## Lesson 5 – Daniel 4

### NIV

**Daniel 4:1** King Nebuchadnezzar, To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world: May you prosper greatly!

**2** It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. **3** How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.

**4** I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. **5** I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. **6** So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me.

**7** When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. **8** Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

**9** I said, “Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me. **10** These are the visions I saw while lying in my bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. **11** The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. **12** Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the beasts of the field found shelter, and the birds of the air lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.

**13** “In the visions I saw while lying in my bed, I looked, and there before me was a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. **14** He called in a loud voice: ‘Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches.

**15** But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field. “Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. **16** Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him.

**17** ““The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.’

**18** “This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

**19** Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.” Belteshazzar answered, “My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries!

**20** The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, **21** with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the beasts of the field, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds of the air—

**22** you, O king, are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

**23** “You, O king, saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live like the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.’

**24** “This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: **25** You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.

**26** The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. **27** Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”

**28** All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. **29** Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, **30** he said, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?”

**31** The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, “This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. **32** You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.”

**33** Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

**34** At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. **35** All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?”

**36** At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before.

**37** Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

## NLT

**Daniel 4:1** King Nebuchadnezzar sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world: “Peace and prosperity to you!

**2** “I want you all to know about the miraculous signs and wonders the Most High God has performed for me.

**3** How great are his signs, how powerful his wonders! His kingdom will last forever, his rule through all generations.

**4** “I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living in my palace in comfort and prosperity. **5** But one night I had a dream that greatly frightened me; I saw visions that terrified me as I lay in my bed.

**6** So I issued an order calling in all the wise men of Babylon, so they could tell me what my dream meant. **7** When all the magicians, enchanters, astrologers, and fortune-tellers came in, I told them the dream, but they could not tell me what it meant.

**8** 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.)

**9** “I said to him, ‘O Belteshazzar, master magician, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too great for you to solve. Now tell me what my dream means.

**10** ““While I was lying in my bed, this is what I dreamed. I saw a large tree in the middle of the earth. **11** The tree grew very tall and strong, reaching high into the heavens for all the world to see. **12** It had fresh green leaves, and it was loaded with fruit for all to eat. Wild animals lived in its shade, and birds nested in its branches. All the world was fed from this tree.

**13** ““Then as I lay there dreaming, I saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. **14** The messenger shouted, “Cut down the tree; lop off its branches! Shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruit! Chase the animals from its shade and the birds from its branches. **15** But leave the stump and the roots in the ground, bound with a band of iron and bronze and surrounded by tender grass. Now let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live like an animal among the plants of the fields. **16** For seven periods of time, let him have the mind of an animal instead of a human. **17** For this has been decreed by the messengers; it is commanded by the holy ones. The purpose of this decree is that the whole world may understand that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses—even to the lowliest of humans.”

**18** ““O Belteshazzar, that was the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now tell me what it means, for no one else can help me. All the wisest men of my kingdom have failed me. But you can tell me because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.’

**19** “Upon hearing this, Daniel (also known as Belteshazzar) was overcome for a time, aghast at the meaning of the dream. Finally, the king said to him, ‘Belteshazzar, don’t be alarmed by the dream and what it means.’ “Belteshazzar replied, ‘Oh, how I wish the events foreshadowed in this dream would happen to your enemies, my lord, and not to you! **20** You saw a tree growing very tall and strong, reaching high into the heavens for all the world to see. **21** It had fresh green leaves, and it was loaded with fruit for all to eat. Wild animals lived in its shade, and birds nested in its branches. **22** That tree, Your Majesty, is you. For you have grown strong and great; your greatness reaches up to heaven, and your rule to the ends of the earth.

**23** ““Then you saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, “Cut down the tree and destroy it. But leave the stump and the roots in the ground, bound with a band of iron and bronze and surrounded by tender grass. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven. Let him eat grass with the animals of the field for seven periods of time.”

**24** ““This is what the dream means, Your Majesty, and what the Most High has declared will happen to you.

**25** You will be driven from human society, and you will live in the fields with the wild animals. You will eat grass like a cow, and you will be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses. **26** But the stump and the roots were left in the ground. This means that you will receive your kingdom back again when you have learned that heaven rules.

**27** ““O King Nebuchadnezzar, please listen to me. Stop sinning and do what is right. Break from your wicked past by being merciful to the poor. Perhaps then you will continue to prosper.’

**28** “But all these things did happen to King Nebuchadnezzar. **29** Twelve months later, he was taking a walk on the flat roof of the royal palace in Babylon.

**30** As he looked out across the city, he said, ‘Just look at this great city of Babylon! I, by my own mighty power, have built this beautiful city as my royal residence and as an expression of my royal splendor.’

**31** “While he was still speaking these words, a voice called down from heaven, ‘O King Nebuchadnezzar, this message is for you! You are no longer ruler of this kingdom. **32** You will be driven from human society. You will live in the fields with the wild animals, and you will eat grass like a cow. Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses.’

**33** “That very same hour the prophecy was fulfilled, and Nebuchadnezzar was driven from human society. He ate grass like a cow, and he was drenched with the dew of heaven. He lived this way until his hair was as long as eagles’ feathers and his nails were like birds’ claws.

**34** “After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever. His rule is everlasting, and his kingdom is eternal.

**35** All the people of the earth are nothing compared to him. He has the power to do as he pleases among the angels of heaven and with those who live on earth. No one can stop him or challenge him, saying, ‘What do you mean by doing these things?’

**36** “When my sanity returned to me, so did my honor and glory and kingdom. My advisers and officers sought me out, and I was reestablished as head of my kingdom, with even greater honor than before.

**37** “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and he is able to humble those who are proud.”