



# REVEALER OF MYSTERIES

## the book of Daniel



### Lesson 4

### Daniel 4

This chapter contains one of the most amazing documents in human history: a first-person account by a superpower-ruler of his own spiritual journey from pride to humility and his discovery of God's greatness. Although we humans are creatures with limited abilities and obvious flaws, we tend to be full of pride, and we resist humbling ourselves. Although God promises to raise up the humble, we often insist on trying to do it on our own. When will we learn?

#### 4 King Nebuchadnezzar,

To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world...

<sup>4</sup>I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. <sup>7</sup>When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. <sup>8</sup>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.)

<sup>9</sup>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. ..."

<sup>19</sup>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."

According to Daniel, who wrote chapter four?

Isn't that a little strange? Does this happen anywhere else in the Bible?

On a scale of 1 to 10 (ten being good), how were things going for the king when he had this dream?

How can this be dangerous to our spiritual health?

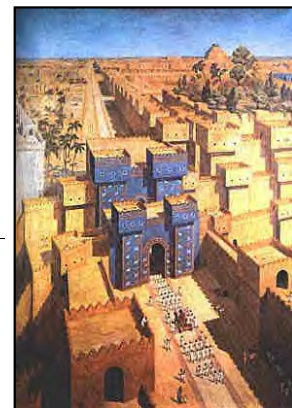
As we observed before, the king has a wide range of emotions. Which ones are exhibited in verse 5?

Verses 7 and 8 seem to be a re-run of what happens earlier in the book. Why does the king even bother to ask these guys? What's the point of recording it here?

Summarize Nebuchadnezzar's dream in verses 10-17.

Take what the king hears the "messenger" say in the first part of verse 15 and compare it to what Daniel had interpreted in his other dream in chapter 2, verses 39 and 40. Why might this alarm the king?

Verse 19. How does Daniel react when he realizes what the dream is about? Why do you think he reacts this way? Do you think he is afraid for himself, for the king, or both?



"Under Nabopolassar (c. 626-605) and his son Nebuchadnezzar II (c. 605-562), ancient Babylon attained the height of its splendor. It was probably the largest and most elaborate city in the ancient world, including the "hanging gardens" (one of the seven wonders of the world) and over 50 temples."

NIV Bible Dictionary

<sup>27</sup> 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."

<sup>28</sup> All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>29</sup> Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, <sup>30</sup> 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?"

<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> 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?"

<sup>37</sup> 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.

Verse 27. Daniel offers some gracious advice; based on the verses immediately following, does it appear that Nebuchadnezzar took the advice to heart? According to verse 28, how long did God give him to change?

**Read Deuteronomy 4:24, 5:9, and 6:15.** What is the common theme in those verses and how does it apply to the king's assertion in verse 30?

"His daily routine consisted of wandering around the lawns... it was his custom to pick up and eat handfuls of the grass as he went along... his only drink was water. The only physical abnormality consisted of the lengthening of the hair and a coarse, thickening condition of the fingernails. Without institutional care, the patient would have manifested precisely the same physical conditions as those mentioned in Daniel 4:33."

Report of a young man in a British mental institution, 1946. Cited in Introduction to the Old Testament, by R.K. Harrison, Eerdmans, 1969.

As Nebuchadnezzar returns to his senses, he has new insight into spiritual realities. What does he learn?

### DIGGING DEEPER

Do a word study on the concept of pride and humility. Look up the following passages and record your observations:

- **Numbers 12:3** Why do you think Moses developed humility?
- **Matthew 18:1-4** How does Jesus use a child as an example of humility?
- **Philippians 2:5-8** How can the Creator of the Universe be humble?
- **1 Peter 5:5-7** Did the author of this passage start out being humble?

Using a Concordance or a Bible software program, look up "humble", "humility", "proud" and "pride" in the book of Proverbs. What do you find?

### LIFE RESPONSE –

- Can you identify with Nebuchadnezzar? When in your life were you really humbled? Are you thankful for that experience now? What did it teach you?
- How can we guard against pride? What might be some "danger signs" or "red flags" to watch out for?