

**Daniel**  
**Chapter 4**

**Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream**

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“1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.

2 I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.

3 How great are His signs,

And how mighty His wonders!

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,

And His dominion is from generation to generation.

“This chapter begins with a formal proclamation from the king who praised the Hebrew God and confessed that God’s Kingdom will continue forever.” Perry Stone, OT Hebraic Study Bible, p. 1332.

*“6 For unto us a Child is born,*

*Unto us a Son is given;*

*And the government will be upon His shoulder.*

*And His name will be called*

*Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,*

*Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*7 Of the increase of His government and peace*

*There will be no end,*

*Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,*

*To order it and establish it with judgment and justice*

*From that time forward, even forever.”*

*The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” Isaiah 9:6-7*

*“15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”” Revelation 11:15*

*Also see Psalm 2.*

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. 5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. 6 Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation.

See: Isaiah 47:12-13; Jeremiah 2:11; Isaiah 40

8 But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, saying: 9 “Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.

10 “These were the visions of my head while on my bed:

I was looking, and behold,

A tree in the midst of the earth,

And its height was great.

11 The tree grew and became strong;

Its height reached to the heavens,

And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.

12 Its leaves were lovely,

Its fruit abundant,

And in it was food for all.

The beasts of the field found shade under it,

The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches,

And all flesh was fed from it.

13 “I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. 14 He cried aloud and said thus:

‘Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,

Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.

Let the beasts get out from under it,

And the birds from its branches.

15 Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth,

Bound with a band of iron and bronze,

In the tender grass of the field.

Let it be wet with the dew of heaven,

And let him graze with the beasts

On the grass of the earth.

16 Let his heart be changed from that of a man,

Let him be given the heart of a beast,

And let seven times pass over him.

17 ‘This decision is by the decree of the watchers,

And the sentence by the word of the holy ones,

In order that the living may know

That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men,

Gives it to whomever He will,

And sets over it the lowest of men.’

18 “This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you.”

Daniel Explains the Second Dream

19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. So the king spoke, and said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.”

Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!

20 “The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which could be seen by all the earth, 21 whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home— 22 it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.

23 “And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times 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 They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

26 “And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules. 27 Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.”

#### Nebuchadnezzar’s Humiliation

28 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king spoke, saying, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?”

31 While the word was still in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! 32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.”

33 That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws.

#### Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

34 And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding 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 is from generation to generation.

35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;

He does according to His will in the army of heaven

And among the inhabitants of the earth.

No one can restrain His hand

Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down."

**Perry Stone Commentary, OT Hebraic Study Bible, p. 1334**

"Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a large, tall tree in the center of the earth, growing strong and high, with the top reaching toward heaven and visible from all directions (x. 10-11). The leaves provided shelter, food, and shade: and the birds rested on its branches (v 12). Suddenly a "watcher\* (holy one) was commissioned from heaven to sever the branches and cut down the trunk of the tree, leaving the stump in the ground. The leaves were shaken off the branches, and the birds and animals scattered (v, 13-14). The stump with the roots remained in the ground with a band of iron and brass encircling it (v. 15). Then the voice in the dream changed from talking about the tree and addressed the fallen tree as "him" and "his" (v. 15-16). The voice from heaven instructed the watcher angel to pass over the stump seven times (V. 16). Then we are told the coming event in this dream was from a decree by the watcher and by demand of the "holy ones" (a term for Jewish saints) to demonstrate that God was in control of the political affairs of humankind (v. 17). This demand could imply that the Jews were praying for God to judge Nebuchadnezzar for destroying the holy city and the temple.

Daniel meditated on the dream for one hour and then gave the interpretation (v. 19). The great tree, providing shade and food, was the king himself, who had built a kingdom and become strong and great to the ends of the earth (v 20-22). The king would be driven out of his position as king and live like the beasts of the earth, eating grass like an animal, until seven times (years) passed by (v. 25). The king would be restored to his kingdom as king and give God glory in the end. Daniel told the king that if he repented and helped the poor, God would lengthen his days on earth (x.27).

A year later when the king was boasting in his heart about the great empire he had built, he was stricken with a rare disease thought to be *Lycantropy*, from the Greek word *lukos*, meaning "a wolf," and the word *anthropos*, meaning "a man." The proud and arrogant king was turned into a "wolf man"! He grew long hair and long fingernails and ate grass like an ox (v. 33). After seven years, his sanity returned, and he gave the Hebrew God all glory and honor, realizing that God alone controls kingdoms according to the decrees He makes in heaven (v.34-37).

The question has arisen as to who took the throne of Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar experienced his mental breakdown. Nebuchadnezzar's son Nabonidus challenged his father in a court conspiracy and won, becoming the king in his father's place. After seventeen years as king, the people lost confidence in his authority. He left Babylon for an eleven-year military expedition, leaving the throne to his son Belshazzar, the very king in charge the night Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and Persians (see Dan. 5:30-31)."

#### **Commentary from Matthew Henry, Blue-Letter Bible**

"The kings of the earth are to their subjects but as the shadow of a great tree; but Christ is to his subjects as the shadow of a great rock, Isa. 32:2. Nay, because that, though strong, may be cold, they are said to be hidden under the shadow of his wings (Ps. 17:8), where they are not only safe, but warm."

#### **Perry Stone Commentary, OT Hebraic Study Bible, p. 1334, Chapter 4:15-16**

"Of all of the major biblical empires of prophecy (Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Media-Persian, Grecian, and Roman), five of the six either maintained the same name or exist as a major nation where the ancient empire originated. Today, Egypt is a nation, the Assyrians are Syria, and the Persians are Iranians. Greece still exists; Rome, Italy, is still a vibrant and historical city. The only empire name that no longer exists is ancient Babylon, known today as Iraq. The name Babel or Babylon is never used in connection with that part of the world at this time in history.

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, when the tree was severed, the stump remained in the earth. This may be a cryptic reference that the land of ancient Babylon will rise up again at the end of days. Notice that an iron and brass band encircled the tree trunk (v. 15). The same metals, brass and iron, were also seen in the metallic image of the king's earlier dream (see the article "The Metallic Image--The Dream of Gentile Empires" in Daniel in Depth). These two metals are identified as the brass thighs of Greece and the iron legs of the Roman Empire. Some suggest this was a reference to these two empires that would arise in the future. However, if this were the case, then where is Media-Persia, the very

empire that overtook Babylon and is identified in the metallic dream as the chest and arms of silver (2:32)? If these bands were future empires, then the three metals of silver, brass, and iron would have encircled the stump.

The bands of brass and iron have significant prophetic meaning. Note that even though the entire tree is cut, the roots will be rebuilt with the brass and the iron bands. There is another reference to the iron and brass in a vision

Daniel received of a fourth-beast kingdom that would rule the earth. We read:

*"Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows" (Dan. 7:19-20).*

The iron is definitely a symbol of the Roman Empire, including the divisions of the east and the west. This would include the following modern nations: Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Turkey, Northern Iraq, Romania, Bulgaria, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, France, Italy, and Greece.

The brass is identified as the Grecian Empire that spread under the dominion of Alexander the Great. It included all of the above nations, with the exception of Italy, France, Spain, and Great Britain. However, it included Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

What makes this prophetic dream doubly significant (first for the days of Nebuchadnezzar and second for the time of the end) is that Babylon is mentioned in the book of Revelation as a city of religious harlotry (chapter 17) and as an economic center (chapter 18). The fact that the iron is still connected to the tree can indicate that the areas of the old Roman Empire will be linked to the rise of this neo-Babylon. The brass of Greece can also indicate a strong connection, not only to the nation of Greece but also to the fact that the Grecian empire spread eastward toward Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan -also the land of ancient Persia. Today most of the areas of ancient Babylon, Greece, and Rome are predominantly Islamic or have a strong Islamic population. Thus, this dream of the stump and the metal bands could indicate that a new Babylon will rise again (in the Islamic world) and unite the areas of the old Roman and Grecian Empires under one man, the Antichrist."

### **Commentary from Matthew Henry, Blue-Letter Bible**

"Note, God in judgment remembers mercy; and may yet have good things in store for those whose condition seems most forlorn. There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, that through the scent of water it will bud, Job 14:7-9."

“Now, When God gives us general warnings of his judgments we should be desirous to understand his mind in them, to hear the Lord's voice crying in the city.”

**Jeremiah 9:24**

*“But let him who glories glory in this,  
That he understands and knows Me,  
That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in  
the earth.  
For in these I delight,” says the LORD.”*