

# A hard lesson to learn

## Nebuchadnezzar's testimony

### Daniel Chapter 4



# Introduction

King Nebuchadnezzar, To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world.. May you prosper greatly! It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.



It was over 20years after Chapter1 and some 10 years after chapter 2!

Time can move fast in the Bible.

# Daniel called to interpret

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. 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.



Prosperous =  
flourishing. The word  
is usually used of  
trees etc. See what is  
coming...

# The “Wise men” fail

So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me.



Could not = didn't (NKJV)  
Probably they understood what it meant but were afraid to say.

He speaks in the 1<sup>st</sup> person in his introduction and conclusion  
In the centre section it is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person – he wasn't 'himself' then.

# Daniel called to interpret

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.) 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. These are the visions I saw while lying in my bed..



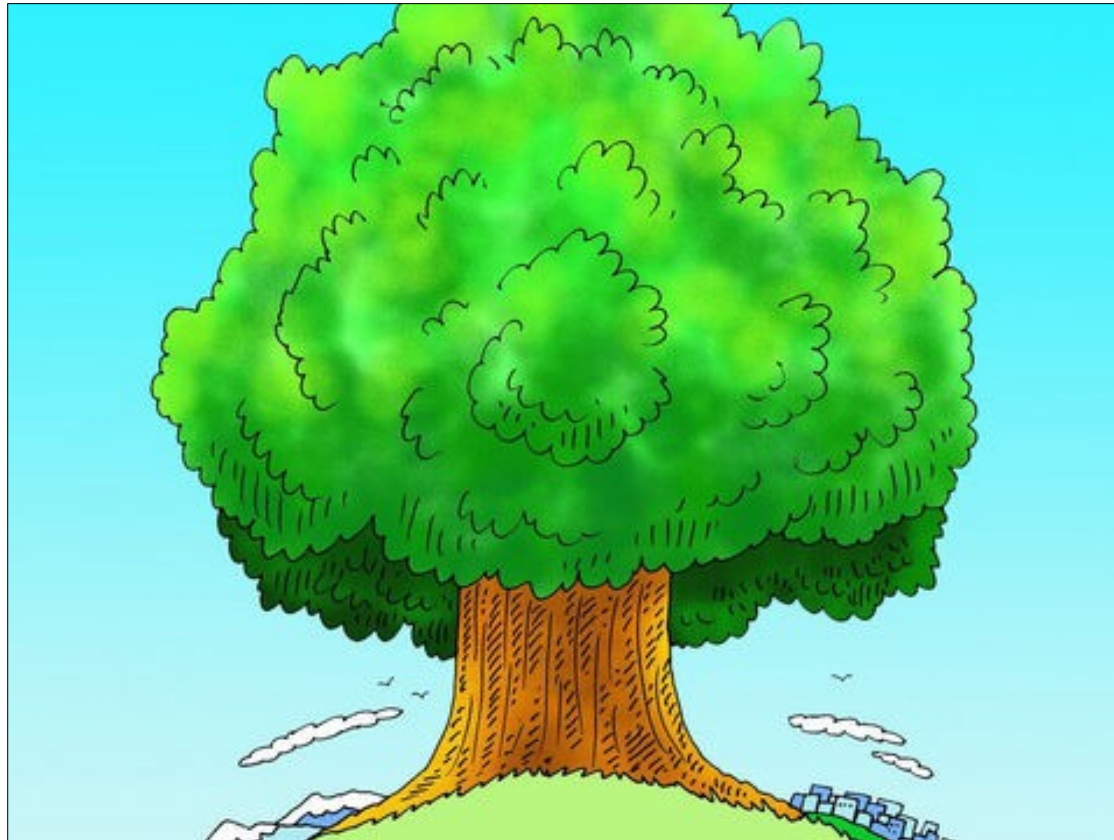
At last he remembers Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar shows his pagan background:

Bel  
spirit of the gods

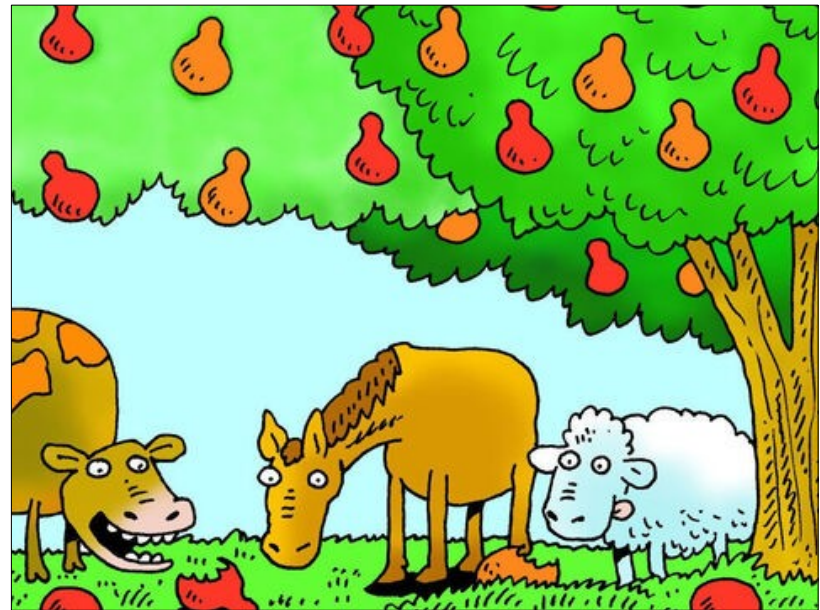
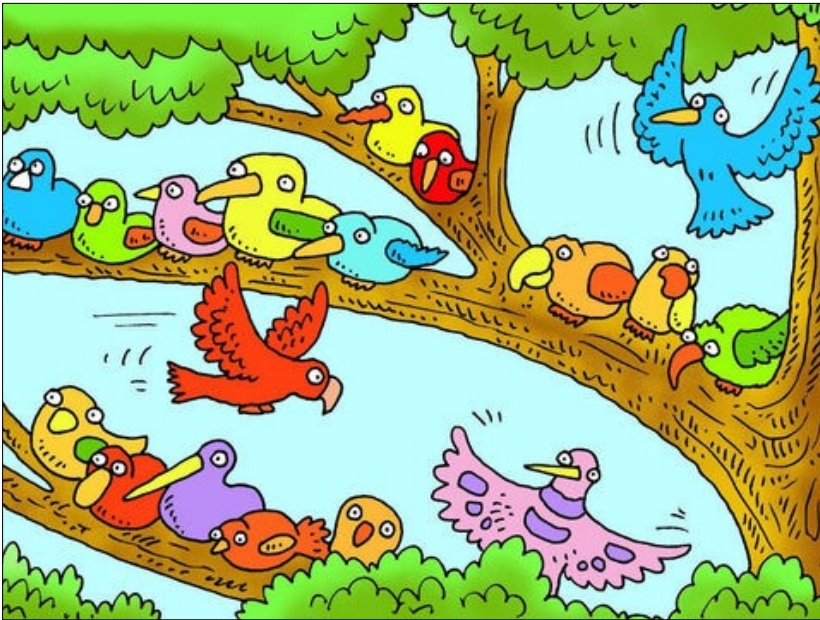
# The Dream – part 1

I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth.



# The Dream – part 1

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. "



## The Dream – part 2

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. 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. But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field.`





## The Dream – part 2

‘Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. 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.’ 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.



The account changes from a tree image to describing a man who is about to go insane. He suffered from boanthropy!

7 times ? We don't know how long this was but it was long enough to grow his hair and nails!

# Nebuchadnezzar asks for the interpretation

"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."



He was frightened by the dream, but perhaps he was hopeful that like last time, Daniel's interpretation would be favourable for him.

## And Daniel sees its terrible implication

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!"

Daniel cares about Nebuchadnezzar's well-being.

# The Dream Part 1 - interpreted

The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, 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-- 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.



## The Dream Part 2

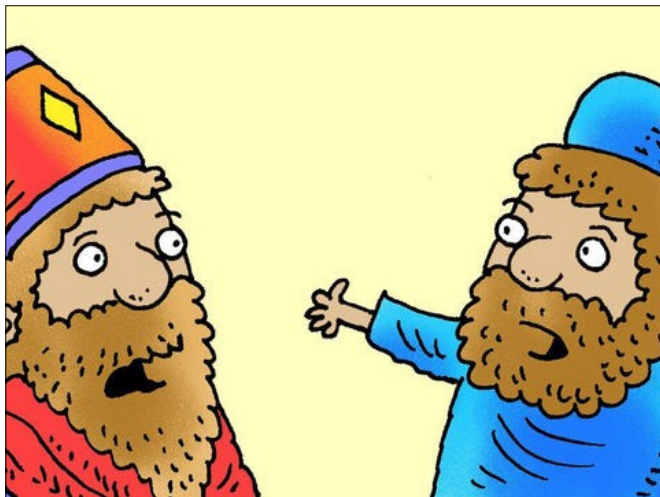
You, O king, saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, `Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live like the wild animals,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



## The Dream Part 2 interpreted

This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king..

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. 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.



He was going to lose his sanity and would be out of 'office' for sometime – perhaps protected in some way.

# Repent

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.



A true prophet of God has to tell it as it is!

The future may depend on your response to God's warning. cf. Nineveh in Jonah's day.

# 1 year later    The Dream fulfilled – because he didn't repent

All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, 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?"



Babylon was really impressive.

Twelve months later, it seems that he had forgotten and thought he had got away with it.

Another example of God's longsuffering!



# The decree is to be carried out

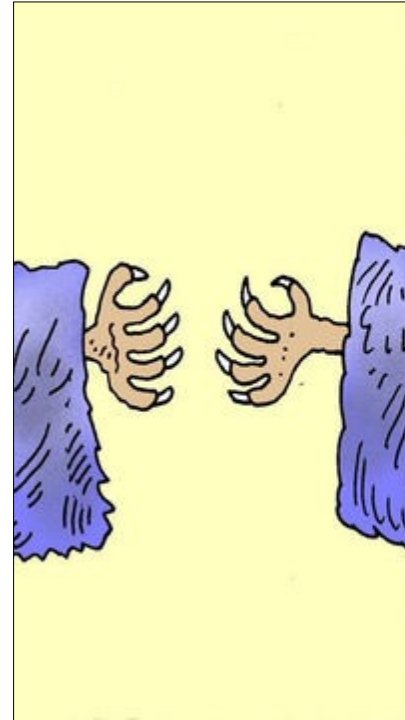
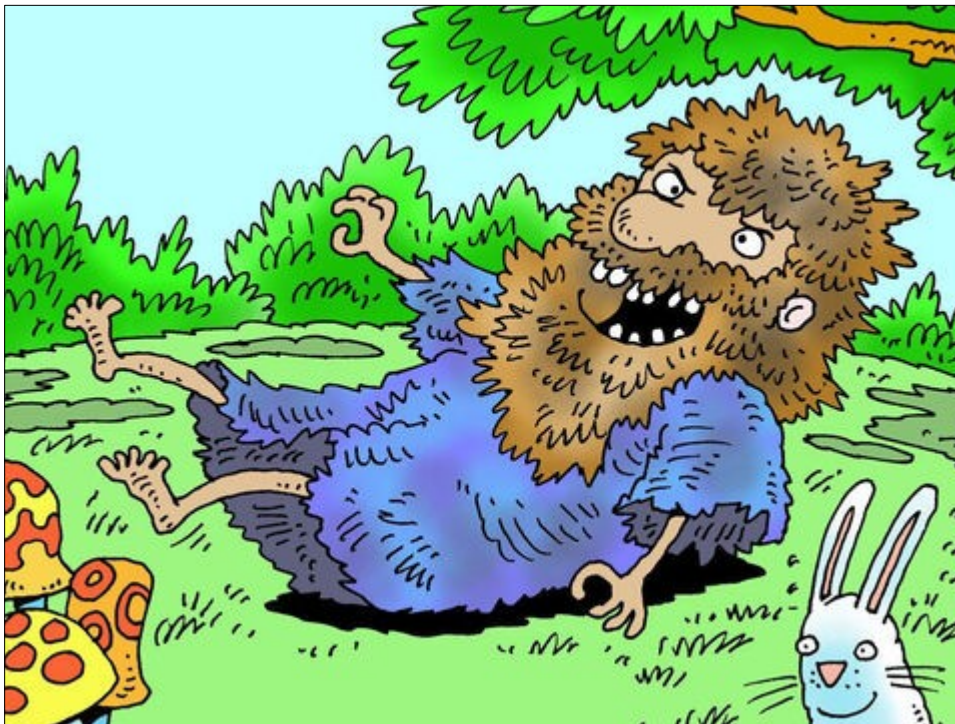
The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar.. Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you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



When God speaks, things happen.

# The decree carried out

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.



This rare condition has been observed in some mentally ill patients.

## A Good Result – he finally “got it”

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 honoured and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. 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?"



It is back to the 1<sup>st</sup> person – he is back to himself. But humbled.

# Restored. But now as a humble steward

At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honour and splendour 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.



# The Lesson learned - worship God alone

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.



This account has not been found in the official Babylonian accounts that have been discovered, but a later historian mentions something like this. Why not?

# The Lesson learned - worship God alone

*For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.*  
*1Corinthians 1:26-29*

