



# Chapter 4

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Centuries ago, another powerful leader was temporarily set aside. Daniel 4 records the events of at least eight years when Nebuchadnezzar was the powerful king of Babylon. During this time, the king was warned in a dream of divine discipline. Choosing to disregard the warning, Nebuchadnezzar became insane for seven years, and his position and power were removed while he lived like an animal.

Following the seven years of divine discipline, Nebuchadnezzar's sanity was restored. His kingdom was also restored, and his majesty and splendor were given back and even increased. But Nebuchadnezzar was never the same again. On the surface, our text describes the way God dealt personally and individually with Nebuchadnezzar. The lessons learned by this king have a much broader application than just to Gentile kings. That which God taught Nebuchadnezzar, He was also seeking to teach His people, Israel. Beyond this, as we explore our text, we should see that these lessons are of vital importance to every Christian and every non-Christian.

Chapter 4 is a continuation of chapters 1-3 in that Nebuchadnezzar is the central character.<sup>1</sup> Chapters 1-4 may be viewed as a unit, with chapter 4 as the conclusion of this first section in Daniel. This chapter could, and did, stand alone, and its uniqueness should be recognized and appreciated.

Although chapter 4 originally stood by itself as a letter from the king of Babylon, it has been neatly integrated into the Book of Daniel. The letter was written to all the peoples, of every language (4:1). Verses 1-18 are written in the first person ("I") and verses 19-33 in the second and third person ("you," "the king"). This is necessary in part because someone of sound mind must describe the king's insanity. Finally, in verses 34-37, the text returns to a narration in the first person ("I"), where the king once again publicly praises the God of Israel, while humbly acknowledging his own humiliation and restoration.

Some dispute that Nebuchadnezzar became a true believer in these verses. Their reluctance to acknowledge his conversion is understandable, for the text focuses not on Nebuchadnezzar's salvation but on his removal and restoration from office. I do not know of any unbeliever who could write as Nebuchadnezzar has in these verses. His introductory words and conclusion sound similar to those written centuries later, penned by the apostle Paul, words which do not exalt men, but God.

The structure of Daniel 4 may be outlined as follows:

- (1) Verses 1-3 — Nebuchadnezzar's Greeting
- (2) Verses 4-12 — Nebuchadnezzar's Dream: Part I
- (3) Verses 13-18 — Nebuchadnezzar's Dream: Part II
- (4) Verses 19-27 — Daniel's Interpretation and Exhortation
- (5) Verses 28-33 — Nebuchadnezzar Put Out to Pasture
- (6) Verses 34-37 — Nebuchadnezzar's Praise<sup>2</sup>

The affidavit of a Gentile king! A statutory edict officially published throughout the world, issued in 562 B.C., the year he recovered from insanity. This is one of the longest chapters in Daniel.

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<sup>1</sup> There is, of course, a sense in which Daniel and his three friends are the central characters, which I would not dispute. But notice that while Nebuchadnezzar is prominent in every chapter (1-4), Daniel is not referred to in chapter 3, and his three friends are unnamed after chapter 3. Only Nebuchadnezzar is present in all four of the first chapters of Daniel.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, Biblical Studies Press, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1995

The fourth chapter of Daniel consists of a proclamation of Nebuchadnezzar in which he recounts the sequence of events which transpired in his God-induced humiliation. The objection is made that the proud, self-centered king who erected an image of himself at Dura would never condescend to tell a story of his own humiliation. The power of God, however, can change even a king's proud heart. The story actually assists the king by explaining the reason for his temporary insanity. It also shows the restoration of the sovereign to his kingdom to be the result of the hand of God.<sup>3</sup>

**McGee Introduction:** This chapter is going to give us a great deal more information about this man Nebuchadnezzar than we have had before. Actually, there was a skeleton in the family closet—something I am sure they didn't boast of: Nebuchadnezzar suffered from a form of insanity. This chapter is a leaf of history taken from the archives of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar's form of insanity is pretty well identified and known today, and it is something which a number of world rulers have suffered from.

We are living in a day when a great deal of attention is given to mental illness and various forms of abnormal behavior. I wonder sometimes just who *is* normal in this mad world in which we live! A psychologist will tell you that the bulk of mankind is normal, a few are abnormal, and a few are above normal or geniuses. Who is to say who is sane and who is not sane? The standard, of course, is the way most of us act—the behavior of the majority is called normal. When just a few react, that is abnormal, which, of course, is an arbitrary distinction. Who in the world is going to say that what the majority is doing today is normal? That could be quite a subject of debate, and I think it would be very difficult to sustain a thesis that the majority of us are normal. In Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, Hamlet was sent from Denmark over to England (they thought he was a little touched in the head) because, they said, in England everyone was abnormal!

There is the story of the man who had trouble sleeping at night because he had the feeling that there was someone under his bed. He was losing sleep because he had to get up many times during the night to look under the bed and satisfy himself that no one was there. He finally went to the psychiatrist with his problem. The psychiatrist told him, "Well, you really do have a problem, and it is going to be difficult to bring you back to normal, but I think we can do it. It will take ten sessions, and it will cost you twenty-five dollars for each session." The man left, saying he would think it over and let him know. However, he never returned. Several weeks later the psychiatrist met the man on the street and asked him why he had never come back. The man replied that he had been cured with the help of a carpenter friend of his. He had told his friend his problem, and the carpenter said he could fix it for him. He came over to the man's house with his saw and simply sawed off the legs of the bed. "Now that fellow *can't* get under my bed!" the man told the psychiatrist. I guess a lot of us suffer some kind of abnormality, but this man Nebuchadnezzar had a real problem.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Believers Study Bible

<sup>4</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:549). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## **Daniel 4:1**

**Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.**

**[all the earth]** All the earth under Nebuchadnezzar—not all the earth outside his kingdom, which included only the modern states of Palestine, Trans-Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran. The phrase "all the earth" must be understood in a limited sense, as explained of the limitations of the Antichrist's kingdom.<sup>5</sup>

**Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people**—This is a regular decree, and is one of the most ancient on record; and no doubt was copied from the state papers of Babylon. Daniel has preserved it in the original language.<sup>6</sup>

**Nebuchadnezzar the king:** This unique chapter is the testimony of a Gentile king about how God changed his heart. In this, Nebuchadnezzar is a good example of a *witness* (one who relates what he has seen and experienced).<sup>7</sup>

## **Daniel 4:2**

**I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.**

This was the second proclamation or decree exalting God (Daniel 3:29-30; Daniel 4:1-3; cp. Daniel 2:47).

**[I thought it good to show]** A part of the decree was a recital of the wonders wrought by the hand of the true God in his kingdom and on his person.

Nebuchadnezzar could see that God gives us signs and does wonders to testify of Himself to us.

**I thought it good to declare:** It *is* **good to declare** what God has done for us. Satan has a huge interest in keeping us unnaturally silent about the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for us.

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<sup>5</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

<sup>6</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

<sup>7</sup> *David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible* are reproduced by permission of David Guzik, Germany.

### **Daniel 4:3**

**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.**

Nebuchadnezzar was resting because he had conquered the world. He had led his armies into battle successfully and without fear. Now his thoughts and dreams were troubling and upsetting him.

**[his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation]** Nebuchadnezzar, a heathen king, expressed two great doctrines of Scripture that very few Bible scholars understand or acknowledge today:

1. That God's kingdom is to be an everlasting one (Daniel 4:3; Daniel 2:44-45; Daniel 7:13-14,18,27; Isaiah 9:6-7; Zech. 14; Luke 1:31-33; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 22:4-5)
2. That eternal generations of natural people will be on the earth (Daniel 4:3; Daniel 2:44-45; Daniel 7:13-14,18,27; Genesis 8:22; Genesis 9:12; Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 59:21; Zech. 14; Luke 1:31-33; Rev. 5:10; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 22:4-5)

Although Nebuchadnezzar praised Daniel's God, he still did not believe in him completely or submit to him alone (Daniel 4:8). Many people attend church and use spiritual language, but they really don't believe in God or obey him. Profession doesn't always mean possession. How do your beliefs match with your obedience?<sup>8</sup>

Flattering though it may not be, Daniel 4 is more than a biographical sketch of events in the life of king Nebuchadnezzar. It is more than an authorized account of the fall and rise of this Gentile king. This is a personal testimony, directed to all peoples, of every language, not just one nation or race. The focus is not on man, but on the one true God, the God of Israel. Who would have expected such a testimony in light of these words from the king in the previous chapter?

**(Daniel 3:14b-15)** *14 "... Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? 15 Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you will not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"*

This king, mighty in battle, the instrument through whom the king of Judah was defeated and taken captive, now sends forth a greeting of peace and not war. He who once worshipped his own heathen deities now publicly praises the God of Israel! Introducing his account of what this God has personally done in his life through mighty signs and wonders, this earthly king speaks of God and of His eternal kingdom. If these are not the words of a convert, I do not know what more could be asked as proof of conversion. The verses after describe the events which convinced and converted this once heathen king.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>9</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1995

**His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom:** Nebuchadnezzar was a great king, but in this chapter he recognizes that God’s kingdom is far greater and His dominion is completely unique because it is an everlasting kingdom.<sup>10</sup>

**Van Impe:** After the events in this chapter occurred, an apparently docile King Nebuchadnezzar issued a proclamation declaring he had finally learned his lesson: that indeed the most high God was in control of a realm greater than his own—a Kingdom that will last eternally, dominating earthly powers for generations to come. This decree was written by the king himself, his regal attempt to tell an entire nation of the great God he had now come to honor and respect.<sup>11</sup>

**McGee:** This is Nebuchadnezzar’s marvelous testimony, and it shows development in the faith of this man. Back in Daniel 3:29 he issued a decree and expressed a conviction. Here he gives a personal testimony. There it was a decree; here it is a decision. There it was a conviction, and here it is conversion. Chronologically, this testimony should come at the end of the chapter because it grew out of his experience recorded here.

Nebuchadnezzar sends a message of peace to “all peoples, nations, and languages” of his kingdom. He is not speaking of peace among nations—he already has such peace, attained by his military might and enforced by his superior power. Rather, he speaks here of the peace of heart which comes to a sinner when he knows he has been accepted of God and is at peace with God. This man’s own tranquility was restored to him, as we shall see in this chapter.

He speaks also of what “the high God hath wrought toward *me*” His testimony is very personal. God is no longer the God of only the three Hebrew children. He also testifies to God’s signs, His wonders, and His dominion. He recognizes and acknowledges that God’s rule, God’s kingdom, is above his.

The peace of which Nebuchadnezzar speaks can only come to the human heart when it knows God. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1)—that is the peace which He made by the blood of the cross. It is the peace which can come to a sinner’s heart that all is right now because of the penalty which Christ paid—God is for him now and God is on his side. Back of all the trouble and travail that is in the world today, back of all the troubled hearts, is the question of sin. Things are not right. One young fellow expressed it this way to me: “I’m not at peace with myself. I’m not at peace with my parents. I’m not at peace with my teachers. I’m not at peace with anybody.” Fundamentally, man must make peace with God. When there is peace in the human heart, then there can be peace made with those round about us; but, until then, man does not know peace.

I am sure that much of what is called abnormality and insanity today could be cured by bringing the gospel and the knowledge of God to the people who are so afflicted. I thought it was absurd that hospitals were set up to receive the Vietnam War POW’s as they arrived in the Philippine Islands. They were to be examined and given psychological tests there. However, the men came bounding off the planes, ready to make phone calls to a wife, a mother, or some other loved one. Many of them testified that God had been with

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<sup>10</sup> *David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible* are reproduced by permission of David Guzik, Germany.

<sup>11</sup> A Message of Hope from Dr. Jack Van Impe, Commentary on The Book of Daniel, Van Impe

them. They had learned to pray, and Christ had been with them. They didn't need a lot of psychological treatment.

Everything in the world is being taught in our schools and colleges except the Word of God. It is the Word of God which can bring peace to the human heart. This is the problem Nebuchadnezzar had, but he made his peace with God, and God made peace with him. Today, God has already made peace with you—He is waiting for you to make peace with Him. When you have settled that, you won't need to spend much time on the psychiatrist's couch. Instead, you will be a radiant Christian.<sup>12</sup>

### **Daniel 4:4**

**I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace:**

**I—was at rest**—I had returned to my palace in Babylon after having subdued Syria, Phoenicia, Judea, Egypt, and Arabia. It was probably these great conquests that puffed him up with pride, and brought that chastisement upon him which he afterwards describes.

Verses 4 and 5 set the scene. The king is about to describe the dream which caused him such distress. But first he informs us that the dream came to him in the ease and luxury of his earthly kingdom when, in his own words, he was “at ease” and “flourishing” (verse 4). There was nothing intrinsically evil about his success, his power, or his wealth. But something was drastically wrong with his attitude toward his prosperity and his use of his position and power. His prosperity played a part in his problem, as Daniel will soon indicate to the king.<sup>13</sup>

**Was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace:** Nebuchadnezzar's rest was the false peace of the ungodly. God soon shook him from his false security.

### **Daniel 4:5**

**I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.**

**[dream]** This was the second dream of prophetic events. Both times he was troubled and demanded his wise men to reveal the interpretation (Daniel 2:2-16; Daniel 4:5-7). Both times all failed but Daniel.

See Appendix A, Thirty-four Dreams in Scripture (Dake)

Visions occur with some frequency in the Bible. More than twice as many are related in the O.T. as in the N.T. However, more than half of the references in the O.T. are found in the apocalyptic books of Ezekiel and Daniel. Visions constituted one of the methods

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<sup>12</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:550). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1995

employed by God in the giving of revelation. Although other methods were employed with greater frequency, such as the quiet direction of God's Spirit and audible communication, visions were used whenever the message was to be given in vivid detail. These visions were not, strictly speaking, synonymous with dreams; but a state of slumber, whether natural or induced, seems to have been the primary circumstance whenever God revealed His message to the prophets in a vision. Daniel's visions of the rise and demise of world empires, John's visions in Revelation, and Paul's vision of the poignant appeal of the man from Macedonia are representative of the use God made of visions.

### **Daniel 4:6**

**Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.**

### **Daniel 4:7**

**Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.**

**[they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof]** In the first dream these same wise men promised to give the interpretation if he would only tell them the dream. Here he told the dream and they still failed.

**I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation:** This is not the same dream as in Daniel 2. Nebuchadnezzar readily told his counselors this dream but they did not tell him what it meant. The dream was fairly easy to interpret; the wise men probably lacked *courage* more than *insight*. Nebuchadnezzar says they did not make it known, not that they *could not* make it known.

### **Daniel 4:8**

**But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom *is* the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, *saying*,**

**[at last Daniel came in before me]** When all the magicians, astrologers, soothsayers, and Chaldeans had proved their powerlessness to interpret the dream, Daniel made known the true interpretation in one hour (Daniel 4:6,19).

**[in whom is the spirit of the holy gods]** The Holy Spirit was in Daniel and this is the way the heathen king expressed the fact (Daniel 4:8,9,18; Daniel 5:11,14).

**[gods]** Aramaic: '*Elahiyn* (H426), Gods. A plural noun equal to Hebrew: '*Elyhiym* (H430) used 2,347 times in the Bible of the true God, indicating plurality this many times

even though often translated in the singular. *'Elohiym* (HSN-430) is translated "gods" 216 times but should have been translated "Gods" all 2,347 times when used of the true God. See Appendix B The Trinity (Dake).

Once again, God revealed future events to the king in a night dream (see 2:1-3, 28-29). What he saw greatly troubled the king (verse 5). Calling for his wise men, this time he did not demand that they first declare his dream to him; he knew this was too much to ask. He told them his dream and then asked for their interpretation. As before, none of the king's heathen wise men could declare the meaning of the dream.

At last, Daniel appears before the king. We are not told that the king summoned Daniel specifically, but he does seem confident that Daniel would be able to interpret his dream. He refers to Daniel by his Babylonian name, Belteshazzar, rather than his Hebrew name. No mention is made of Daniel's God, but only of the "spirit of the holy gods" (verse 8).

Why did the king not summon Daniel first? Why does he not mention Daniel's God? Why the more general reference to the "gods"? It is not difficult to theorize the answers. At the pinnacle of success, pride and arrogance have swollen the king's ego. How could he retain his pride if he admitted the futility of his own religion? How could he keep his image and honor, and praise the God of one of the nations subject to him?

Doubtless, Nebuchadnezzar believed Daniel could interpret his dream, but he wanted to give his wise men an opportunity first. Today we hear the expression, "Buy American." If possible, Nebuchadnezzar wanted to "Buy Babylonian." He wanted one of his heathen wise men to interpret the dream. Likely it would be more flattering than what Daniel would reveal. And he would not be forced to face the superiority of Daniel's God. Daniel was Nebuchadnezzar's last chance. Only when all else failed did he call upon this Hebrew to interpret his dream. Even when Daniel stood before the king, the king dealt with him only as a man in touch with the gods like the rest of his wise men. He seems to hope Daniel will deal with him as a heathen rather than as a Hebrew.<sup>14</sup>

**At last Daniel came before me:** "And why 'at last'? Why was he not sooner sent for? If the soothsayers and sorcerers could have served the turn, Daniel had never been sought to. This is the guise of graceless men; they run not to God till all other refuges fail them."

**His name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god:** Before Daniel interpreted the dream described in this chapter for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon considered the Babylonian deity *Bel* his god.

This means that what he saw previously with Daniel and the three Hebrew young men was enough to impress him, but not enough to convert him. Being impressed with God isn't the same as being converted.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, Biblical Studies Press, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1995

<sup>15</sup> *David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible* are reproduced by permission of David Guzik, Germany.

## **Daniel 4:9**

**O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.**

**[master of the magicians]** Daniel was recognized as being greater than all the learned men and religious devotees of his day. There is no indication that he belonged to this class or any other mentioned here. These were no doubt followers of Zoroaster, founder of the ancient Persian religion and the wisdom of the Magi. They were originally a Median tribe and were invested early with priestly rites. They guarded the sacred fire, recited hymns at dawn, and offered sacrifices. They had a reputation for magic arts, studied astrology and astronomy, and claimed to be able to do many things beyond human power. For a more complete study of magical terms used in Scripture see Appendix C: Twelve Forbidden Practices.<sup>16</sup>

Although Dake feels there is no relationship of Daniel to the Magi, there are many scholars who feel that Daniel did start the Magi as a group of learned persons who knew about the stars, and also who knew when Christ would come according to the star that would appear at his birth. That is how they knew to come at the birth of Christ.

**[I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee]** He had definite proof of this in Daniel's manifestation of the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and interpretation referred to in Daniel 2.

**Holy Spirit, Revelation**—The Spirit enabled Daniel, like Joseph before him (Ge 41:38), to interpret dreams. See Da 5:11, 14. The Aramaic language of the original text makes a subtle wordplay. The word “gods” may be understood either as singular or plural. Nebuchadnezzar intended it as plural. The inspired writer meant readers of the Bible to hear the singular. The one God, through His one Spirit, reveals Himself in dreams to His chosen interpreter to instruct His people and give hope for the future.<sup>17</sup>

**McGee:** Again the wise men were called in and were unable to give an interpretation of the dream. It was God who gave both of his dreams, and only God can give the interpretation. Finally, Daniel was called in. Nebuchadnezzar had learned that Daniel was a Spirit-filled man and that interpretations were given him by God.

Nebuchadnezzar is introducing the vision that he has had, and he gives us a surplus of the personal pronoun *I*.

I think that the family had kept this man's insanity quiet. They didn't talk much about it, but those closest to him did recognize it. I believe the psychiatrists today would label it hysteria. Hysteria is a highly emotional mental disease. It is psychotic, rather than a structural form of insanity (in other words, Nebuchadnezzar was not insane because he had been dropped on his head as a baby). It manifests itself in somnambulism (sleepwalking) and amnesia (loss of memory), and it is thought to be hereditary.

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<sup>16</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

<sup>17</sup> Disciples Study Bible

Historians tell us that a number of other world rulers have suffered from some form of mental instability: Antiochus Epiphanes, Charles VI of France, Christian VII of Denmark, George III of England, Otho of Bavaria, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and Napoleon. It has also been in the Spanish royal line, the Russian line (among the czars), and also in the English line. Henry VI of England was a real madhatter, and suffered from something similar to hysteria. Hitler also had that problem. And here, the head of gold, Nebuchadnezzar, was a lunatic. He had bats in his belfry. He was not ruling with a full deck in his hands. He was just a little off, if you please. All of this was revealed in his extreme emotionalism—he would move in any direction and to an extreme.

The whole key to this chapter is found in verse 17, and it is important to note it at this point: “This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.” God says that He puts on the thrones of this world the basest of men. In other words, God gives us the kind of rulers we deserve and the kind we want. There have been many rulers who had bats in their belfries and who were off their rockers. God says He sets over the kingdoms the basest of men: twenty-five hundred years of history since Nebuchadnezzar have demonstrated the truth of this statement.<sup>18</sup>

### **Daniel 4:10**

**Thus *were* the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof *was* great.**

#### **“Tree” as an Idiom**

- A man (Ps 1:3; 37:35; 52:8; 92:12 Isa 56:3; Jer 17:8).
- Assyrian and Egyptian Pharaoh are compared to cedar of Lebanon (Ezek 31:3f).
- Olive tree: Israel (Rom 11:16-24; 2 Kgs 14:9; Ps 1:3; 37:35; 52:8; 92:12; Ezek 17).
  - Transplanted shoot (Ezek 17:22ff; 22:24).
  - Stump (Isa 11:1).
- Mustard “tree” (Mt 13:31-32).

#### **The Prophetic Tree Vision:**

1. I saw a tree in the midst of the earth.
2. The height was great (Daniel 4:10).
3. The tree grew.
4. And it was strong.
5. Its height reached heaven.
6. All the earth could see it (Daniel 4:11).
7. The leaves were fair (beautiful).
8. The fruit was abundant.
9. It provided food for all creatures.

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<sup>18</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:551). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

10. It provided shadow for all.
11. It provided homes for all (Daniel 4:12)
12. A watcher, a holy one (an angel) came down from heaven (Daniel 4:13)
13. He cried aloud:
  - (1) to hew down the tree.
  - (2) to cut off his branches.
  - (3) to shake off his leaves.
  - (4) to scatter his fruit.
  - (5) to let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from its branches (Daniel 4:14).
  - (6) to leave the stump of his roots in the earth.
  - (7) to let it be wet with the dew of heaven.
  - (8) to let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth (Daniel 4:15).
  - (9) to let his heart be changed from that of a man to a beast.
  - (10) to let seven times pass over him (Daniel 4:16).
  - (11) This decree is by the watchers.
  - (12) The demand is by the holy ones.
  - (13) To the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.
  - (14) And He giveth it to whomsoever He will.
  - (15) And He setteth up over it the basest of men (Daniel 4:17).

**I saw—a tree**—This vision Nebuchadnezzar says made him afraid. What a mercy it is that God has hidden futurity from us! Were he to show every man the lot that is before him, the misery of the human race would be complete.

Great men and princes are often represented, in the language of the prophets, under the similitude of trees; see Ezekiel 17:5, 6; 31:3, etc.; Jeremiah 22:15; Psalm 1:3; 37:35.<sup>19</sup>

**A tree in the midst of the earth:** The tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was noted for its size, strength, prominence, beauty, fruit, and shelter.

### **Daniel 4:11**

**The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:**

### **Daniel 4:12**

**The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.**

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<sup>19</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

## **Daniel 4:13**

**I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;**

**[watcher and an holy one came down from heaven]** A holy angel from heaven at the command of watchers and holy ones (angels) carrying out the will of the Most High (Daniel 4:13,17). These watchers oversee the affairs of men to enable them to bring about the will of God in the earth (Daniel 4:17; Daniel 10:10-21; Daniel 11:1; Daniel 12:1; Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:14).<sup>20</sup>

**A watcher and a holy one**—These are both angels; but, according to the Chaldean oracles, of different orders. They appear, according to their opinions, to be a kind of judges of human actions who had the power of determining the lot of men.

The "watcher" was probably an angel. We're so concerned with the material world that we often forget how much the spirit world is involved in our lives (Ephesians 6:12). Satan often attacks us through our emotions. He can give us that depressed and out-of-sorts feeling. We need to recognize an attack of Satan, resist the attack (James 4:7), and rejoice that God has provided the victory for us through Jesus Christ our Lord!<sup>21</sup>

**McGee:** These verses contain the substance of Nebuchadnezzar's dream which centers around a tree that grew tall to heaven, wide enough to fill the earth. The tree was evidently an evergreen, for its leaves were fair. It was a fruit tree, and its fruit was eaten by all. Beasts stood in its shadow, and birds rested in its branches.

In Scripture, a tree can represent a number of things. A tree can represent a man: "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Ps. 1:3; see also Jer. 17:8; Isa. 56:3). Also a tree can represent a nation (see Ezek. 31:3–14; Matt. 24:32–33). The mustard tree in Matthew 13:31 and 32 represents Christendom today. The olive tree represents both Israel and the Gentiles (see Rom. 11:16–24). The tree here represents Nebuchadnezzar primarily and also his kingdom of Babylon—the king and kingdom are inseparable.

The "watcher" and "holy one" are of an order of God's created intelligences. The watchers are the holy ones who administer the affairs of this world. The Book of Daniel makes it very clear that God has created intelligences who administer His universe and this world in which you and I live. God has His administrators under which are many created intelligences. Over against that, Satan also has his minions who have charge over certain areas of certain nations. We will see more of this in the Book of Daniel.

These watchers see all, hear all, and tell all. Many believers today think they can live in secret, that they are not under the eye of God. We talk about wanting to enjoy our privacy, but if you want to know the truth, you and I haven't any privacy. Psalm 139:7–12 tells us that we cannot get away from God, no matter where we go. Secret sin on earth is open scandal up yonder in heaven. His created intelligences know all about you, and if

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<sup>20</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

<sup>21</sup> Chuck Smith Sermon Notes, Book of Daniel, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, CA

you are a Christian, you had better go to God with that “secret” sin in your life and get it straightened out.

Now the tree was hewn down, and a band of iron and brass was put around its stump to indicate that it would grow and flourish again in seven years. And the heart of the ruler (that is, of the “tree”) was to be changed into that of a beast—the vegetable was to become an animal.<sup>22</sup>

### **Daniel 4:14**

**He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:**

[tree] Great men are often compared to trees (Psalm 1:3; Psalm 37:35; Ezekiel 17:5-6; Ezekiel 31:3; Jeremiah 22:15; cp. Matthew 7:17-19). There are also times when trees may represent men in general.

[get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches] His courtiers, officers, etc. all abandoned him as soon as his insanity appeared. He was driven from them to eat with beasts for seven years (Daniel 4:25).

**Hew down the tree**—As the tree was to be cut down, the beasts are commanded to flee away from under his branches. His courtiers, officers, etc., all abandoned him as soon as his insanity appeared; but he soon fled from the society of men.<sup>23</sup>

He cried aloud and said thus: The watcher (presumably an angel) explains the fate of the tree. He notes that the tree is to be chopped down, and it will lose its size, strength, prominence, beauty, fruit, and shelter. He also says that the tree represents a man who will be changed and given the heart of a beast.

Bound with a band of iron and bronze: These are either for the tree stump’s confinement or protection. It is no longer free and great.

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<sup>22</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:551). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>23</sup>;Adam Clarke’s commentary

### **Daniel 4:15**

**Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:**

**Leave the stump**—Let him not be destroyed, nor his kingdom alienated.

### **Daniel 4:16**

**Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.**

[times] = “years” (Dan 7:25, et al.)

**Let his heart be changed**—Let him conceive himself to be a beast, and act as such, herding among the beasts of the field.

**Let seven times pass over him**—Let him continue in this state for seven years. I knew a man who was thus changed in his heart—in his imagination. He believed himself to be a bear, and would imitate the ursal growl, etc.; and the case did not appear to be hypochondriacal. Whether he ever came to sound mind, I know not.<sup>24</sup>

### **Daniel 4:17**

**This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.**

Councils in heaven: 1 Kgs 22:19-22; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6. Powers that be are ordained of God (Rom 13:1).

[**basest of men**] Referring perhaps to the enemies of the king (Daniel 4:19).

**The Most High ruleth**—He never leaves the government of the world to man, to second causes, or to fortuitous occurrences. What are thus called are his agents; they are no moving causes.

One of the most difficult lessons to learn is that God is sovereign. He is above all of those who are above us. He limits the power and authority of all the government, business, and religious leaders in the world. Those who live in freedom and with a relatively high degree of autonomy find this difficult to understand. While we may feel as though we are free to do what we please, God is sovereign over all of our plans and desires.

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<sup>24</sup> Adam Clarke's commentary

**In order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men:** Nebuchadnezzar heard these words in his dream. In light of this, the dream isn't hard to interpret - it clearly deals with the humbling of a great king. No wonder none of Nebuchadnezzar's counselors wanted to interpret the dream for him!

Like most kings - ancient and modern - Nebuchadnezzar wanted to believe that *he* ruled instead of God or anyone else. "Both the Assyrian and the Babylonian kings thought of themselves as rulers over all the earth, so describing themselves in their inscriptions."  
(Wood)

### **Daniel 4:18**

**This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise *men* of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou *art* able; for the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee.**

Most distressing to the king was the second act of his dream. An "angelic watcher" enters the scene, calling for the tree to be cut down. Its branches were to be removed and its fruit scattered. A metal band was to be put around the stump, prohibiting its growth. The "tree" was now to become a creature, living in the open field among the beasts and having the mind of a beast.

The king may not have understood the symbolism, but the words spoken by the watcher clearly spelled trouble for Nebuchadnezzar. The words struck terror into the heart of this proud, arrogant ruler:

**(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".*

The king implores Daniel to inform him of the dream's meaning.<sup>25</sup>

**Van Impe:** We have now arrived at the latter half of the king's reign, and some twenty-three years have passed between chapters three and four. Nebuchadnezzar has been a successful warrior abroad for most of his career, and he is now spending the remainder of his life in relative ease at his palace in Babylon. Chapter four could probably be called Nebuchadnezzar's spiritual biography. But just as leopards are not known for changing their spots, so the king remained a proud man and would later have to pay the price for forcing his subjects to worship his great gold image on the plain of Dura a generation earlier. The score would soon be evened, as we shall see as the drama of this chapter unfolds.

### **Daniel—Consistent in Courage**

Once again, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that caused him great anxiety. By now, he seemed convinced that the old guard of magicians, astrologers, and wise men would

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<sup>25</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1995

not have the necessary skills to interpret his latest dream, so he brought in a new group of seers, "all the wise men of Babylon," not just those from the palace. This time, he didn't play games by asking them to tell him his dream and give him the interpretation. He told them the dream immediately. Still, even the wisest in the realm were at a complete loss for an interpretation.

I've always wondered why he didn't bring Daniel in immediately instead of going through the frustration of working with supposed wise men who never seemed to be able to deliver. Eventually, Daniel (Belteshazzar) was brought before the king, taken away momentarily from his busy life as judge and prime minister of the realm. Nebuchadnezzar now knew that only a supernatural being could interpret his latest anxiety-ridden dream, and he seemed confident that Daniel was the man to give him the answers he needed.

### **Trees = Power**

As described in the passage above, the king's latest dream was about a luxuriant tree of great height, with branches heavy with enough fruit to sustain the lives of many. But then a holy "watcher" descended from heaven and commanded that the tree be cut down, leaving only a stump in the ground. To a king who was already paranoid about losing his kingdom, this dream was one more in a painful series that indicated neither time nor the God of the Hebrews was on his side. Let's look at this dream and its various components as they relate both to biblical symbolism and to final end-time mysteries.

Throughout the Word of God, trees represent kingdoms and powers. Two examples:

1. The cedar tree usually refers to the nation of Lebanon (1 Kings 4:33) and
2. The fig tree speaks of Israel (Joel 1:7; Hosea 9:10; Matthew 24:32).

Nebuchadnezzar did not know it at the time, but the great tree that reached to heaven represented him and his vast empire. Babylon was a powerful tree—a mighty kingdom that had refused to bow its head to anything but a lifeless Marduk and the other Babylonian gods. But it was an abusive power, filled with the pride of an arrogant king who had crafted a golden image and made his subjects bow to it. Because of the king's arrogance, God would cut the tree representing Nebuchadnezzar's great power to the ground, but enough would remain (the stump) to indicate that it was still alive enough to undergo seven years of testing, a graphic picture of the seven-year Tribulation hour—a time we are rapidly approaching.

### **Twenty-One Judgments**

During those seven years of trouble, according to the dream, the king would be stricken down. He crawled about on his hands and knees, disheveled, a mad monarch forced to eat grass as an animal. His hair probably grew to where it touched his back. His fingernails were like bird claws.

There was a time when skeptics argued that such a situation was not plausible. Raymond Harrison recited a personal experience with a modern case similar to that of Nebuchadnezzar, which he observed in a British mental institution in 1946. He found a man who was mentally deranged, had claws like a bird, with matted hair hanging all the way to his feet. Furthermore, the man's diet was grass, which he ate while crawling on all fours. The disease was given a name: Boanthropy, or Zoanthropy.

Medical records prove this malady does, in fact, exist—and is the same disease, or the equivalent, that Nebuchadnezzar experienced in his dream and life. This state of mental derangement would last for seven years, representing the duration of the Tribulation, that

terrible time on earth when millions who insist on honoring a false god will go through judgments destined to inundate the world.

How many judgments will there be during these perilous days? Twenty-one! Each of them is listed in Revelation chapters six to eighteen.

Here are just a few: Revelation 6:2 says the Antichrist appears on a white horse; verses 4 to 8 tell us there will be three other riders. The red horse depicts peace being removed from the earth with the cataclysmic judgments of war annihilating one-third of the world's inhabitants; verse 5 says the rider on a black horse causes mass starvation; and verse 8 gives us the dramatic picture of a rider on a pale horse that causes myriads of diseases, eliminating another one-fourth of the human race; in verse 9, we see yet another judgment, where millions are slaughtered for honoring the name of God and for declaring their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ; verse 12 speaks of the judgments in the heavens: *"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood."* The judgment described in Revelation 8:1 is so terrible that it unleashes the other fourteen judgments, causing an unusual silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour.

The angels, knowing what is coming, are so stunned as they contemplate the future that there is a holy hush in the presence of God. This day is rapidly approaching, and the Book of Daniel is the prophecy through which these end-time mysteries are now being unsealed. In chapter two, we saw the future kingdoms clearly delineated, and now we know that most of Daniel's prophecy has already happened. There is only one part of the prophecy yet to come: the stone smashing the feet of the image— Christ's glorious return to establish His millennial reign for one thousand years upon the earth (Revelation 20:4). This is all going to take place soon. But before it does, there will be the Tribulation period, pictured by the example of a mentally deranged, animal-like king, who crawls on the ground eating grass for seven years. Once again, a desperate king turns to his foreign friend and counselor for the interpretation of his dream. And again, what Daniel is about to tell the king is not good news. But Daniel remains courageous, refusing to dodge the issue. God has given Daniel the interpretation, and he is prepared to speak the mind of God freely before King Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>26</sup>

**Declare its interpretation:** Nebuchadnezzar knew he could get an honest answer from Daniel, even when the truth was hard to bear.

**You are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you:** Though Nebuchadnezzar recognized Daniel as a man filled with the Spirit of the Holy God, he had not yet yielded himself to the Holy God.

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<sup>26</sup> A Message of Hope from Dr. Jack Van Impe, Commentary on The Book of Daniel, Van Impe

## **Daniel 4:19**

**Then Daniel, whose name *was* Belshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream *be* to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.**

[**astonied for one hour**] Astonished, not because of the difficulties of understanding it, but he felt for the king, the nation, and for the welfare of his own people.

[**the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies**] The dream concerns your enemies and the interpretation benefits them.

**Daniel—was astonished for one hour**—He saw the design of the dream, and he felt the great delicacy of interpreting it. He was not puzzled by the difficulties of it. He felt for the king, and for the nation; and with what force and delicacy does he express the general portent; “The dream to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies!”

When Daniel understood Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, he was stunned, and he wondered how to break the news. He told the king he wished what the dream foreshadowed would happen to the king’s enemies and not to Nebuchadnezzar. How could Daniel be so deeply grieved at the fate of Nebuchadnezzar—the king who was responsible for the destruction of Daniel’s home and nation? Daniel had forgiven Nebuchadnezzar, and so God was able to use Daniel. Very often when we have been wronged by someone, we find it difficult to forget the past. We may even be glad when that person suffers. Forgiveness means putting the past behind us. Can you love someone who has hurt you? Can you serve someone who mistreated you? Ask God to help you forgive, forget, and love. God may use you in an extraordinary way in that person’s life!<sup>27</sup>

Daniel, assured that he was not to be intimidated by his interpretation of the dream, begins by expressing his wish that the dream were to apply to Nebuchadnezzar’s enemies rather than to him. The tree which the king saw in the dream represented himself. The order to fell the great tree was prophetic of a temporary form of insanity known as lycanthropy in which a man imagines himself to be some form of animal. The word derives from the Greek *lukos*, or “wolf,” and *anthropos*, meaning “man.” During this diseased period, Nebuchadnezzar would find it impossible to continue with the affairs of state (v. 25). Yet control would not be irretrievable, since the stump with its root would be left (v. 26). The purpose of the lycanthropy was to remind the king of the transcendent sovereignty of the Lord (v. 25). The same assertion was made one year later when the sentence was executed (v. 32).<sup>28</sup>

Preaching the truth is a must in spite of the message or consequences. Daniel interprets the truth to Nebuchadnezzar.

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<sup>27</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>28</sup> Believers Study Bible

## **Daniel 4:20**

**The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;**

### **Interpretation of the Tree Vision:**

1. Nebuchadnezzar, you are the tree (Daniel 4:20-22; cp. Daniel 2:38)
2. The watcher, a holy one sent down from heaven, is an angel announcing the decree of the Most High (Daniel 4:23-24)
3. The decree is: You will become mentally deranged and men will drive you from your kingdom. You will imagine yourself one of the beasts of the field, eating and sleeping with them for seven years, until you learn that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will (Daniel 4:25)
4. The stump left in the ground with the roots held firm by a band of iron and brass means that your kingdom shall be sure unto you when your lesson is learned (Daniel 4:26)<sup>29</sup>

**Van Impe:** Even though Daniel had been given divine truth directly from God, it still was not easy for him to express those thoughts to the king. He stood there astonished, virtually unable to speak for one hour. Then we see a small crack in the king's pride as Nebuchadnezzar becomes compassionate toward Daniel, telling him not to let the dream or its interpretation get him down. The king seems to be stiffening his upper lip; since he's been in a similar situation before with Daniel, he's probably gearing himself up to hear an interpretation that may not be favorable.

Essentially Daniel says, "O, king, I've got bad news for you." It's always difficult to bring bad tidings to a friend or a colleague, and Daniel, a trusted servant of the king, must have felt great pain in his own heart. Yet, he remained courageous and spoke the Word of God, even though it was a terrible confirmation of what God would do.

### **Speaking the Truth in Love**

Comfortable or not, it is always the role of the believer to speak the truth in love. Just as a doctor is obliged to cut out a cancer if he is to fulfill his role of worthy physician, so we are compelled to speak the truth of God's Word with compassion. God says that we must warn people of the wrath to come, or their blood will be on our hands. It's the same message Paul communicated to young Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2:

*"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."*

This is what Daniel did once again. The prophet of God was not afraid. He had been given a message from God, and he would deliver it. Daniel was prepared to stand firm in his convictions. Even in a direct one-on-one situation with the king, Daniel did not hesitate to say, "Thus saith the Lord."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

<sup>30</sup> A Message of Hope from Dr. Jack Van Impe, Commentary on The Book of Daniel, Van Impe

### **Daniel 4:21**

**Whose leaves *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:**

### **Daniel 4:22**

**It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.**

**It is you, O king:** Daniel applies the point without ambiguity. Instead of reaching for a general point (“we all could use a little more humility”) Daniel brought the truth in love. This reminds us of what the prophet Nathan said to King David: *You are the man!* (2 Samuel 12:7)

“Great men and princes are often represented, in the language of the prophets, under the similitude of *trees*, see Ezekiel 17:5-6; 31:3 and following; Jeremiah 22:15; Psalm 1:3; 37:35.” (Clarke)

### **Daniel 4:23**

**And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;**

### **Daniel 4:24**

**This *is* the interpretation, O king, and this *is* the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:**

### **Daniel 4:25**

**That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.**

**[they shall drive thee from men]** Who actually did this is not stated. It was not his enemies, for they would have killed him. The vision concerned his enemies (Daniel 4:19) in the sense that his absence from the throne would be good news to them. He could not carry on any more invasions in such condition. His friends no doubt fulfilled this and protected him in his sojourn among the beasts. No new king was chosen in his stead. His kingdom was secure and waiting for him when he should become normal. His

own son was regent during this insanity and he no doubt helped preserve the kingdom for him, which made possible the fulfilling of Daniel 4:26.

God wanted Nebuchadnezzar to realize that his kingdom and power were given to him by God. God gives kingdoms and rules the rulers (Luke 2:1-3).<sup>31</sup>

**Drive you from men . . . make you eat grass like oxen . . . wet you with the dew of heaven:** When Daniel explained this to Nebuchadnezzar, the king probably couldn't have guessed just how literally it would be fulfilled.

**After you come to know that Heaven rules:** This was God's intended purpose for Nebuchadnezzar. The king could have avoided this humiliating fate if he genuinely humbled himself.

### **Daniel 4:26**

**And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.**

**Thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee**—No new king was set up; Evil-merodach his son was regent during his father's insanity.

### **Daniel 4:27**

**Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.**

**Daniel's threefold advice to Nebuchadnezzar:**

1. Be open to my counsel.
2. Break off your sins by doing right.
3. Quit your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.

**Break off thy sins by righteousness**—Do justice. Thou hast been an oppressive man; show mercy to the poor, many of whom have been made such by thyself: witness the whole nation of the Jews. He was to cease from his sins—repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, in order that he might find mercy at the hand of God.

**4:27-33** Daniel pleaded with Nebuchadnezzar to change his ways, and God gave Nebuchadnezzar 12 months to do it. Unfortunately, there was no repentance in the heart of this proud king, and so the dream was fulfilled.

Fully grasping the dream and its interpretation must have dramatically changed Daniel's facial expression. From Daniel's body language, the king must have read that

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<sup>31</sup> Chuck Smith Sermon Notes, Book of Daniel, Calvery Chapel, Costa Mesa, CA

the revelation he had received from the dream was bad news. Nevertheless, the king was intent on knowing the meaning of the dream. He encouraged Daniel not to be distressed by what the dream meant. In truth, it seems that Daniel was more deeply affected by the dream than the king.

Daniel prefaced his interpretation with a sincere expression of his love and concern for the king. He wished that the dream applied to the king's enemies and not the king himself. Daniel is truly committed to serve his king and to contribute to his well-being. In Daniel, we see a man who not only understands biblical submission, but one who practices it. He now reveals to Nebuchadnezzar the meaning of his dream, concluding with a course of action which might avert or delay the adversity of which the king is warned.

On the one hand, the tree depicts things as they were. The increasing height and beauty of the tree depicts the rapidly increasing majesty and splendor of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. On the other hand, the tree reveals the ideal, or the standard, by which Nebuchadnezzar's reign is evaluated. It is on the basis of the failure of Nebuchadnezzar to live up to this standard that he is brought low, as indicated in the second portion of his dream.

Nebuchadnezzar judged himself and his kingdom according to the standard of greatness, power, and glory. By this standard, the king had done well. The "tree" was not created primarily for its own greatness or glory. It was to provide shelter and food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, providing for and protecting the earthly animals.<sup>32</sup>

The text's inference is that Nebuchadnezzar failed to grasp the purpose for his kingdom in the divine economy. He looked at his kingdom in terms of how well it promoted and displayed his own power and glory, not in terms of the purpose for which God had ordained it. For example, while God had raised up Nebuchadnezzar to defeat, capture, and preserve the Jews of Jerusalem and Judah, Nebuchadnezzar had set himself on a course of action which would have destroyed the Jews (see chapter 3). Rather than look upon wealth and power as a divinely bestowed stewardship, to be used to benefit the weak and the poor, Nebuchadnezzar seems to have used his power to oppress the powerless. For this reason, Nebuchadnezzar will be brought low, or, in the figure of the tree, he will be cut down and his stump banded for a period of seven years.

Reluctantly, Daniel reveals to king Nebuchadnezzar that a time of divine discipline lies ahead. Instead of being a great tree, from which the earthly creatures may find food and shelter, the tree will be cut down and join the earthly creatures. Rather than remain as a tree, the king is about to become bird-like and beast-like. His hair will become like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws (verse 33). His food will be that of the beasts of the field. He will graze like a beast and live in the field without shelter, so that the dew of heaven will drench him (verse 25). Even his thinking will be beast-like (verse 16).

All that happens to the king will be done not for his ultimate destruction, but for his deliverance and restoration. The time of his humiliation is seven years. The basis for his restoration will be his acknowledgement of the sovereignty of Almighty God, who rules in heaven, and who both raises up kings and puts them down. His restoration to sanity

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<sup>32</sup> The accuracy of this imagery is interesting. Today, in the Pacific Northwest, environmentalists are seeking to prevent the cutting down of those trees which provide a habitat for the spotted owl.

and power will come when he acknowledges that he is God's unworthy servant, who has been given power to benefit and bless others rather than exalt and glorify himself. Verse 27 must be recognized as a key verse. Daniel goes beyond the dream and its meaning to urge the king to take preventative measures, forestalling if possible this divine discipline and prolonging his prosperity. Daniel exhorts the king to "break away from his sins" and to "do righteousness," to cease his "iniquities" and to "show mercy to the poor."

It is here that the king's sins are more specifically exposed and the nature and manifestation of true repentance is made known to the king. His pride and arrogance are exposed as the root of his sin. The fruit of his sin seems to be self-promotion and the oppression of the poor.

It is imperative that we see Daniel linking pride and oppression in this text. The king's pride has resulted in the oppression of the poor. The king's humiliation is to be the cure, resulting in justice and mercy. What is the connection between pride and oppression? Pride is a kind of plagiarism. It attempts to grasp for ourselves the glory which belongs to another. Nebuchadnezzar took all the glory for the greatness of his kingdom; he did not give glory to God. In effect, he began to set himself in the seat of God, reminiscent of other glory-seeking creatures, including Satan himself (see Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28). Taking glory which does not belong to us causes us to see ourselves as better than others. Pride ignores and denies the truth that prosperity comes from God, as a gift of His grace, and not the reward for our greatness. Pride also interprets others' poverty as proof of inferiority and the penalty for inferiority. Sooner or later, pride justifies the use of power as rightly taking advantage of the poor to gain from their weakness.

The Christian's perception of wealth and poverty is the opposite—the strong are to help the weak. The pagan perception of wealth and poverty assumes the strong have the right to gain at the expense of the weak. Pride then has led to oppression. Jonah's life is an example of this. As a Jew, Jonah believed he was better than the Gentiles. He neither wanted nor needed grace; indeed, he despised it. Nor did he want the Ninevites to experience the grace of God. Jonah did all he could to hinder the salvation of these heathens and even desired to watch them perish. The pride of the self-righteous always reject grace and charity.

The Jewish leaders of Jesus' day were proud and self-righteous. Like Nebuchadnezzar, they regarded their position, power, and prestige as a reward for their superiority. The poverty and affliction of others was regarded as divine punishment for their sins. The pride of those in positions of power led to oppression, and later our Lord accused the scribes and Pharisees of "stealing widow's houses" (Matthew 23:14).

If Nebuchadnezzar was to be "saved" from divine chastening, he must recognize that his position and power were not a reward for his merits, but a gift of divine grace. He must cease using his power to further his personal "kingdom" and begin using his position and power to benefit the weak and the oppressed. This would be true repentance, and it might prolong his prosperity.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1995

**Van Impe:** The first piece of discomfoting news for Nebuchadnezzar was that he was, in fact, the tree. It was a big, strong, sturdy tree, providing food and sustenance for all, seemingly invincible. But Daniel's message was that this power could not last forever—a recurring theme, and one you'd think would now be settling deep into the king's heart. As the tree in the dream, Nebuchadnezzar would literally be "cut down to size," with only a stump remaining: alive but ineffective. He would one day be revived, but only after a terrible mental sickness had afflicted him.

Here I must submit that God is not only a God of irony, but also one of considerable humor. You'll recall the passage where Nebuchadnezzar determined to make his great image all gold because he believed that nobody was ever going to defeat him. When he made that decision, he essentially was saying to Daniel, "Look Daniel, I really don't care what you told me about all that gold, silver, bronze, and clay . . . my statue is going to be all gold. Period!"

So what does God do as He gives Daniel the interpretation of the tree dream? He says, "By the way, King, I want you to notice something about this tree—which is you. There are a couple of things on the bottom you need to know about, like a little band of brass and iron!" I have a feeling this irony was not lost on the king as he probably said to himself, "Come on, not that brass and iron stuff again!" God was saying, through Daniel, "King, the secret I've revealed to Daniel, which you accepted at the time, is going to happen; whether you like it or not, the 'brass and iron' are still major players in your ultimate demise."

### **The "Watchers" Among Us—Today!**

And who was telling the king about his future? The "watcher" and the "holy one"—angels, sent to do the bidding of their Father. These watchers see all and tell all—to God. They are all around. They protect you, and they protect me. You'll remember when Jesus was on earth He said, "*Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?*" (Matthew 26:53). A legion in the Roman army consisted of a group totaling seven thousand soldiers. Hence, twelve times seven thousand, or eighty-four thousand angels, would appear instantaneously at the word of Jesus Christ if He requested help.

These were angels who would come from the "third heaven" (2 Corinthians 12:2). That's so far into space it's mind-boggling. However, here's an attempt to describe the third heaven and the distance God's elect angels travel, coming from that location to earth. The atmosphere, troposphere, stratosphere, mesosphere, ionosphere, and exosphere are all part of the first heaven and reach upwards into the first six hundred miles of space. The second heaven begins at that point and is so astronomical that it's practically impossible to comprehend.

Recently astronomers discovered a new quasar some fourteen hundred billion light years from earth. How far is that, you ask? Well, light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. This produces a total of six trillion miles annually and is called a light year. Thus, the second heaven extends upwards into space some fourteen hundred billion times six trillion miles. Beyond that is the third heaven—the heaven of heavens—God's throne. It's from this seemingly immeasurable distance that these "watchers" and "holy ones" brought Nebuchadnezzar his message of doom in the dream.

When we read a detailed history of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, we see how proud the king was of his great accomplishments, among them a nation he had fashioned into a peaceful

shelter and granary for all—full of nutritional abundance. Because of his superb administrative abilities, no one in Babylon would go hungry. Now that great tree of plenty would be destroyed.., and there, again, was this annoying little band of brass and iron.

Here’s an interesting footnote of history. Nebuchadnezzar often took his military campaigns into the great forests and woods of Lebanon and had become infatuated by the great cedars there. We also read that the king so loved the cedars of Lebanon that he cut many of them down with his own hands. Now that which the king loved would be cut to a mere stump in the ground, meaning that he would soon be removed from office and forced to live away from the palace as a mentally incompetent vagabond, scratching the earth for food as an animal. How long would he be forced to live like this? Until he acknowledged that the true God in heaven was sovereign ruler over the kingdoms of earth.

### **An Invitation Is Extended**

As any good preacher would do after a powerful sermon or illustration, Daniel gave his friend the king an opportunity to repent of his evil ways. Up to that time, Nebuchadnezzar had been immensely cruel to thousands of his subjects, especially during his massive building campaigns (Habakkuk 2:11—13). So, Daniel did not flinch on his interpretation of the dream. There would be no promise that the king would escape from the wrath to come. But Daniel did indicate that perhaps—just maybe—almighty God might extend the king’s era of tranquility if he would repent of his terrible acts of oppression, engage in acts of righteousness, and demonstrate a greater degree of mercy to the poor in Babylon.

We will see the king’s response in our next newsletter.<sup>34</sup>

**Break off your sins:** The right reaction to the threat of judgment is a humble repentance. Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar did not do this. He should have followed the example of the repentance of Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah (Jonah 3).

We might think that Nebuchadnezzar had more reason than most to be proud - after all, he was a great king. Still, he should have remembered the principle Benjamin Franklin put forth in one of his proverbs: “The greatest monarch on the proudest throne, is obliged to sit upon his own rear end.”<sup>35</sup>

**McGee:** This man Nebuchadnezzar is disturbed within his own heart—he has no peace. He has brought peace to the world—there is no one to challenge his authority at this time—but he is living in sin. Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that he needs to repent of and turn from his sins. He needs to turn to God and to a life of righteousness. Daniel advises him to repent in order to reverse the coming judgment. There is still hope for deliverance—Nebuchadnezzar could know the peace and tranquillity of God. I think this is God’s final warning to Nebuchadnezzar.

A great deal of the mental and emotional abnormalities that we see today are actually the result of spiritual problems. Now I do not say that they all are, as I know that there is sometimes a structural basis for such a problem. However, much of the disturbed

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<sup>34</sup> A Message of Hope from Dr. Jack Van Impe, Commentary on The Book of Daniel, Van Impe

<sup>35</sup> *David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible* are reproduced by permission of David Guzik, Germany.

condition we see in the lives of men is rooted in the spiritual condition of men. There is peace for them, if they would only come to Christ.<sup>36</sup>

### **Daniel 4:28**

**All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.**

### **Daniel 4:29**

**At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.**

**[twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon]** God was gracious and gave him 12 full months to check himself from going insane (see Daniel 4:27).

**At the end of the twelve months:** God gave Nebuchadnezzar twelve months to repent, and he probably forgot about the dream during that time - but God didn't forget.

### **Daniel 4:30**

**The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?**

It was a great city. The walls of the square city were 14 miles long on each side, making 56 miles around an area of 196 square miles. Around the city was a deep and broad moat full of water, and beyond that the wall about 108 feet thick and about 417 feet high. There were 100 brazen gates. The houses were 3 and 4 stories high. Roads criss-crossed the city as in modern times.

The city was built on both sides of the Euphrates, the sections being known as the East and West districts. They were joined by a bridge 3,240 feet long. At each end was a royal palace, the eastern one being defended by 3 walls, the outermost being 7 miles in circuit, the second one 4.5 miles, and the third 2.5 miles. There was also a tunnel under the river.

The hanging gardens were 400 feet square rising in terraces planted with trees of various kinds. The temple of Bel and other large buildings made Babylon the greatest city in the world.<sup>37</sup> (See End of Study for more information and maps of Babylon)

**[by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty]** Claiming all glory to himself and not giving any glory to God was the downfall of Nebuchadnezzar. It was God who had chosen him and given him his great kingdom (Daniel 2:19,38). It was God who had warned him 12 months before (Daniel 4:17,26-27).

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<sup>36</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:554). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>37</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

**Is not this great Babylon**—Here his heart was inflated with pride; he attributed every thing to himself, and acknowledged God in nothing. The walls, hanging gardens, temple of Bel, and the royal palace, all built by Nebuchadnezzar, made it the greatest city in the world.

**Is not this great Babylon:** Babylon was truly one of the spectacular cities of the ancient world, including the famous “hanging gardens” built by Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel knew that the new Babylon was the creation of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:30), something previously thought untrue and only verified by recent archaeology. Nobody in the Maccabean period (second century B.C.) thought Nebuchadnezzar built the new Babylon.

In the British Museum, there are six columns of writing recovered from Babylon with describe the huge building projects of Nebuchadnezzar and his zeal to enlarge and beautify the city.

Most of the bricks found in the excavations of Babylon carry this stamp: “Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, supporter of Esagila and Ezida, exalted first-born son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon.”

Late-daters of Daniel (who say that it was written in the times of the Macabees, around 167 B.C.) can’t explain how a late writer would have known to accurately attribute the spectacular buildings of Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar. One liberal Bible commentator, R. H. Pfeiffer, says of this problem: “we shall presumably never know.”

### **Daniel 4:31**

**While the word *was* in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.**

### **Daniel 4:32**

**And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.**

**[that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men]** All people will eventually know from experience that God IS the Most High and sovereign in the earth and the heavens (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Ephes. 1:10; Phil. 2:8-11; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 22:4-5). This truth is emphasized here five times (Daniel 2:21-22; Daniel 4:3,25,32,34-35).

**They shall make thee, etc.**—Thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen. The madness that fell upon him induced him to forsake society, and to run to the woods and deserts, where he lived like a wild beast, his hairs growing long and thick, so as to be a substitute for clothing; and his nails strong and hooked, that he might the better climb trees and grub up the ground, in order to get roots and earth-nuts. It was the mercy of God that thus clothed and accoutred him. His case seems much like that of the maniac in the Gospel, whose

dwelling was among the tombs and in the mountains, and who shunned the society of men.<sup>38</sup>

**They shall drive you from men . . . eat grass like oxen:** The announcement came to Nebuchadnezzar in the same words he heard in his dream. This showed him that the dream was about to be fulfilled, and he would be reduced to the existence of an animal - specifically, an ox.

The form of insanity in which men think of themselves as animals and imitate the behavior of an animal has been observed. Some call it generally *insania zoanthropica* and more specifically in Nebuchadnezzar's case, *boanthropy*, the delusion that one is an ox.

Walvoord quotes a Dr. Raymond Harrison of Britain, who in 1946 had a patient suffering from boanthropy, just as Nebuchadnezzar suffered.

### **Daniel 4:33**

**The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.**

[The same hour] The hour he became so exalted over his great work and kingdom (Daniel 4:28-30,33).

**[he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws]** The mental disease of Nebuchadnezzar is rare. It is called Lycanthropy (from the Greek word *lukos* (G3074), wolf, and *anthropos* (G444), man) because the person imagines himself to be a wolf, a bear, or some other animal.<sup>39</sup>

Nebuchadnezzar went insane immediately after the voice spoke from heaven.

Note the difference here and what is described in Daniel 2. In chapter 2, after Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar his dream and its interpretation, the king honored and promoted Daniel. Here we find no expression of appreciation from the king, nor a promotion or advancement of Daniel. From the silence of the text, the king only politely thanked Daniel at best, choosing not to take his interpretation seriously. The dream itself seems to have had no great impact on the king's attitude or actions.

An entire year passes in silence. Twelve months later, the warning of this dream seems entirely forgotten. The king, in his palace enjoying the fruits of his power and prosperity, looks about him and sees only the splendor of the works of his own hands. It seems to be only in his own reasonings that the king revelled in the glory of this kingdom as the result of his greatness:

**(verse 30)** *'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?'*

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<sup>38</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

<sup>39</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

The thought had no more than passed through his mind when the announcement of the commencement of his humiliation came to the king. His sovereignty was to be removed. His sanity was to be taken away. He who thought himself better than other men was now to be considered unworthy to dwell among men. Henceforth, he would dwell among the cattle, eating grass like the beast of the field. This would take place for seven years, until that time when the king recognized the sovereignty of God over men and kings and kingdoms, and his sanity returned.

Immediately, the pronouncement was fulfilled. In one brief verse, the king's humiliation is described, showing that the dream and its interpretation were precisely fulfilled. Daniel summarizes in one verse what our morbid curiosity would have taken chapters to describe. There is never edification in muddling in man's sin and depravity. How high this king had come in power and glory; how low he fell in humiliation and dishonor.<sup>40</sup>

**Van Impe:** It's now a year later, and God has been patient with Nebuchadnezzar. Despite his earlier bent toward believing in the God of the Hebrews, the king remained stubborn, pretending he was an earthly ruler who would reign forever. Even as he hoped that his friend Daniel would be wrong, the prophecy began to be fulfilled. At the tragic moment when the king finds himself on the verge of a mental breakdown, he begins to engage in a sort of lonely soliloquy about his exploits as ruler of Babylon.

He was probably strolling on the roof of his palace as he spoke—grounds that covered a six-mile area—surveying his great city and all that he had done to make it one of the ancient wonders. His royal chest filled with pride as he boasted of accomplishments never done by others.

Yes, he had done some amazing things and was undoubtedly the greatest kingdom builder in ancient times. He had built two enormous temples and seventeen ornate religious shrines. His Hanging Gardens of Babylon were without equal, something the Greeks later declared one of the Seven Wonders of the World. He had constructed the famous Ishtar Gate—magnificent with its carved bulls and four-legged dragons etched in high relief. With the assistance of hand-picked engineers, he had designed and created amazingly intricate hydraulic systems that carried water effortlessly up from the Euphrates River to his gardens high above the city—gardens that housed some of the most exotic plants and trees of his day.

But as he reveled in his kingly accomplishments, the voice from heaven finally came, even as Daniel had prophesied one year earlier. It was finally over. Payday had arrived. At that moment, the king realized even the best laid plans of kings and men are as dust. The mills of God may grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine. Surely and firmly judgment falls when people refuse to glorify God by taking full credit for their worldly accomplishments. Again, this is the scenario of the seven-year Tribulation period—a time in history when the greatest sin will be committed by another king—the infamous Antichrist, who will magnify himself above God (Daniel 11:36). God despises and judges such arrogance. That's why Proverbs 16:18 declares, "*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*"

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<sup>40</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1995

## The Message of a Frog

As I was preparing this chapter I reminded my wife, Rexella, of a little story that speaks straight to this issue of pride. Once there was a little frog sitting on the ground. He watched forlornly as he saw the great birds of the sky flying overhead. Oh, *if I could only fly like the eagles I would be extremely happy*, he thought. Well, one day, two of the eagles were on the ground. The frog approached them, saying, "Say, I wonder if you two fellows would do me a favor. I've got this long stick, and if you'd just put it in your beaks, I could hang on to it, and we could fly through space together. I've always wanted to fly."

The eagles agreed to the strange request, and slowly they lifted the frog from the comfort of his lily pad, up into the unfamiliar but exhilarating sky above, the frog hanging on to the stick for dear life. Before long, the other frogs turned their heads skyward and in disbelief—unable to see the stick—saw their little green friend ascending farther and farther into space. His friends on the ground began to praise this stunt saying, "What genius thought of doing this?" The frog's ego at this point got the best of him when he shouted, "I-I-I did." By doing so he lost his biting grip on the stick and plunged to earth in a humiliating landing.

My friend, we can do absolutely nothing on our own—no more than that frog could fly without some help from his friends. All we do and have are gifts from God. So the next time you are tempted to say, "I did it all on my own," I hope you'll remember the story of the frog—and that you'll then quickly recall the pride of Nebuchadnezzar, a man who had accomplished great feats to make a name for himself but who, in the process, refused to give God the credit. As a result, he paid the price. He fell, even as Satan did, through pride (I Timothy 3:6).<sup>41</sup>

**He was driven from men and ate grass like oxen:** There is no corresponding record of this seven-year (**seven times**) period of insanity in the secular historical records of Babylon - exactly as we would expect, considering the custom of the times. Nevertheless Abydenus, a Greek historian, wrote in 268 B.C. that Nebuchadnezzar was "possessed by some god" and that he had "immediately disappeared." (Wood)

Some dismiss this account of Nebuchadnezzar's madness as unhistorical, but there is no historical record of his governmental activity between 582 B.C. and 575 B.C. This silence is deafening, especially when we keep in mind how Near Eastern leaders liked to egotistically trumpet their achievements - and hide their embarrassments.

"Although critics have imagined a series of incredible objections to accepting this chapter as authentic and reasonably accurate, the narrative actually reads very sensibly and the objections seem trivial and unsupported." (Walvoord)

Nebuchadnezzar was given the opportunity to humble himself, and he did not. Now God humbled him, and the experience was much more severe than it would have been had Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself.<sup>42</sup>

**McGee:** Nebuchadnezzar moves out of the palace, out yonder to live with nature. God deals with this man personally. As he departs from the plane of normality and rationality, his kingdom slips from him. The insane of that day were driven out rather than being

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<sup>41</sup> A Message of Hope from Dr. Jack Van Impe, Commentary on The Book of Daniel, Van Impe

<sup>42</sup> David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible are reproduced by permission of David Guzik, Germany.

placed in an institution for treatment. Under ordinary circumstances Nebuchadnezzar would never have been able to return to the throne; yet God promised that he would do so after he had learned his lesson.

History corroborates this event in the life of Nebuchadnezzar. Dr. Philip R. Newell has this note from Albert Barnes, “Josephus attributes to the Babylonian historian, Berosus, a definite reference concerning a strange malady suffered by Nebuchadnezzar before his death” (*Daniel, the Man Greatly Beloved, and His Prophecies*, p. 54).<sup>43</sup>

### **Daniel 4:34**

**And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:**

When the seven years were up he was suddenly restored to sanity and began blessing the God of heaven for His mercy.

**[whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation]** See note, Daniel 4:3.

**At the end of the time:** Nebuchadnezzar could not break free from his madness until God appointed the end of the time. Then, he had the opportunity to humble himself and lift his eyes to heaven.

Nebuchadnezzar knew what Spurgeon explains: “The God whom we serve not only exists, but reigns. No other position would become him but that of unlimited sovereignty over all his creatures.”

**I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him:** Nebuchadnezzar could only see who the truth about *himself* when he saw the truth about *God*. The Babylonian King did see who God was, and he eloquently praised His sovereignty - then, his reason returned.

This return of reason results in *worship*. “We do not worship enough, my brethren. Even in our public gatherings we do not have enough worship. O worship the King! Bow your heads now - bow your spirits rather, and adore him that liveth for ever and ever. Your thoughts, your emotions, these are better than bullocks and he-goats to be offered on the altar: God will accept them. Worship him with lowliest reverence, for you are nothing, and he is all in all.” (Spurgeon)

This return of reason results in *prayer*. If we believe what Nebuchadnezzar believed about God, it will certainly show in our prayer life. We will know that God can change the heart and mind of man, the course of rivers, the flow of the oceans, the distribution of resources, and the assignment of angels.

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<sup>43</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:555). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Spurgeon suggests the proper response of the believer to the greatness and sovereignty of God:

- Have a heart of humble adoration
- Show a heart of unquestioning acceptance
- Exercise the spirit of reverent love
- Let your spirit have profound delight

### **Daniel 4:35**

**And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?**

### **Daniel 4:36**

**At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.**

#### **Seven Restored Blessings of Nebuchadnezzar (Dake)**

1. His understanding returned (Daniel 4:34).
2. His reason returned (Daniel 4:36).
3. The glory of his kingdom was restored.
4. His honor and brightness returned.
5. His counselors and lords sought after him again (Daniel 4:36).
6. He was reestablished in his kingdom.
7. Excellent majesty was added to him.

**My reason returned**—Every thing was fulfilled that was exhibited by the dream and its interpretation. It is very likely that this unfortunate king had so concealed himself that the place of his retreat was not found out; and the providence of God had so watched over every thing, that, on his return to his palace, he found his counselors and his lords, who received him gladly, and cleaved to and served him as they had formerly done.

**I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me:** God *wanted* to restore Nebuchadnezzar. The goal wasn't to bring him low, but to bring him to his proper place before God and among men. Truly, Nebuchadnezzar learned that those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

This is knowledgeable testimony from a direct source. Perhaps we might learn from Nebuchadnezzar's plight and be spared a lesson in humility from God's school of hard knocks.

The abiding lesson is plain: *God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble* (James 4:6). There have been many who rise from humble origins to great glory, and then fall. Perhaps it is better to have never been raised up than to rise and then fall. Most, if not all, fall through pride; and a *proud look* is number one on the list of God's most hated sins (Proverbs 6:16-19).

We also see that God *will* glorify himself among the nations. When Nebuchadnezzar took some of the treasures of the Jerusalem temple and put them in the temples of his gods, he had reason to believe that his gods were stronger than the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. By the end of Daniel 4, God Nebuchadnezzar knew which God was the true God. And when Nebuchadnezzar knew it, he wasn't shy about telling people what he had learned - he was a true witness, giving testimony to God's great works.

Some find prophetic significance in this account. Since "Babylon" is used in the scriptures as a figure of the world system at large, we can say:

- Nebuchadnezzar's madness foreshadows the madness of Gentile nations in their rejection of God
- Nebuchadnezzar's fall typifies Jesus' judgment of the nations
- Nebuchadnezzar's restoration foreshadows the restoring of some of these nations in the millennial kingdom<sup>44</sup>

### **Daniel 4:37**

**Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.**

**Now I—praise and extol—**It is very probable that Nebuchadnezzar was a true convert; that he relapsed no more into idolatry, and died in the faith of the God of Israel. It is supposed that he lived seventeen years after his restoration. But the authorized Version, which is followed in the margin, states the date of this decree to be B.C. 563, the year preceding Nebuchadnezzar's death.

At the end of seven terrible years, Nebuchadnezzar was converted and submitted himself to God. Some people will go through seven years of the Great Tribulation before they will submit to God.

At the end of the appointed time, the king did the only thing he, in his beastly state, could do. He merely lifted his eyes toward heaven. It was his way of acknowledging that *God in Heaven is sovereign*, and that He reigns over the affairs of men and of nations. His sanity returned, and then with his whole heart and mind he worshipped the Most High God. Unlike mortal men, God lives forever. His kingdom, unlike the passing kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, endures from generation to generation. Nebuchadnezzar was acknowledging in every possible way the infinite superiority and supremacy of God. Unlike the king of Babylon, God is able to act according to His will, in heaven and on earth. In His sight, those who inhabit the earth are as nothing. How paltry and pathetic the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar now appears in contrast to the glorious kingdom of the eternal, all-wise and all-powerful God.

Nebuchadnezzar's repentance brought about his restoration. Not only did he regain his sanity, he regained his kingdom. He was sought out by his counselors and nobles. His

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<sup>44</sup> *David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible* are reproduced by permission of David Guzik, Germany.

power and greatness increased above that he possessed before his downfall. His final words are those of testimony and worship, addressed to the King of heaven, praising Him for His truth, His ways, His justice and compassion in the lives of mortal men.<sup>45</sup>

**Van Impe:** His reason now restored after his period of derangement, King Nebuchadnezzar swallowed his pride and raised his humbled eyes toward heaven. After his terrible experience as a mad monarch scratching out an existence as an animal, now he was finally willing to honor the true King of heaven. He recognized that all God's works were true and that those who live out their days in pride will be humbled beyond recognition.

What brought Nebuchadnezzar to this realization? It wasn't a miracle. When he saw the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace without a hair singed or a piece of clothing carrying the smell of smoke, and the fourth man in the furnace with them, and their walking out unscathed—that didn't make him a believer. In Nebuchadnezzar's case, it took the sickness of a deranged mind to bring him to his senses, and what a conversion experience he had. The truth we have seen again and again in this chapter is highlighted in Paul's writing to the church at Rome:

*"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Romans 6:17).*

The message? There is hope for all.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9—10, we read,

*"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."*

But praise God, the apostle doesn't stop there. In verse 11 Paul continues,

*"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."*

The good news is always followed by even better news, that none of us needs to be what we once were. There is hope for us all—just as there was hope and an opportunity for restitution for King Nebuchadnezzar. Yes, he paid a great price for his transgressions, just as you and I will always pay a heavy toll when we turn our backs on the foundational principles that God has ordained. True repentance means turning "about face" and heading in God's direction. When we do this, we no longer will want to do the evil we once did. Now, after all the fighting, kicking, and screaming Nebuchadnezzar did to distance himself from the one true God, he finally realized that he was the problem, and that his own sinful pride was the issue.

It took crawling around as an animal for a year to make him realize that he needed to square himself away with the true God. Nebuchadnezzar's conversion changed him from the inside out. Yes, it's a great, historically accurate story. But the deeper, underlying message of Nebuchadnezzar's narrative—and his dream—is that this is all simply a precursor of the shattering events yet to come: seven years of Tribulation where unbridled humans will set themselves up as New Age gods, living unholy, prideful lives

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<sup>45</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1995

and worshipping seducing spirits, even when the obvious handwriting of warning begins to appear on the wall—the intriguing story and subject of chapter five.<sup>46</sup>

**[Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven]**

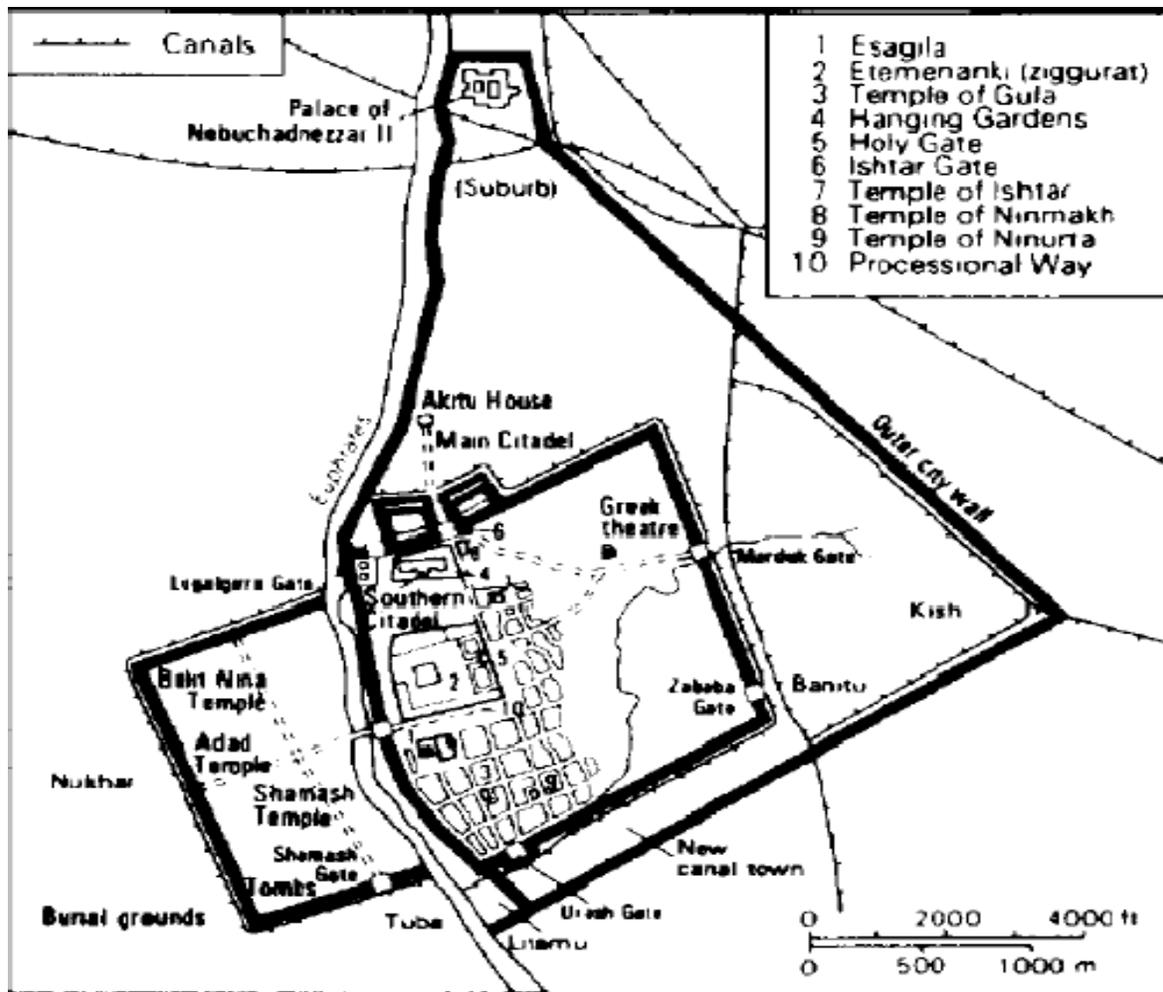
Twenty things Nebuchadnezzar learned: (Dake)

1. that he should honor God.
2. that God was the King of heaven.
3. that All God's works are truth.
4. that God's ways are just.
5. that God is able to abase the proud (Daniel 4:37).
6. that God is Lord of kings (Daniel 2:47).
7. that God is a revealer of secrets (Daniel 2:47).
8. that God sends angels to protect those who put their trust in Him (Daniel 3:28).
9. that God can change man's word (Daniel 3:28).
10. that true servants of God will not worship any other god (Daniel 3:16-18,28).
11. that there is no other god who can deliver people like the true God (Daniel 3:29).
12. that no other god can do miracles like the true God (Daniel 3:25-29; Daniel 4:3).
13. that God's kingdom is everlasting (Daniel 4:3,34).
14. that there will be eternal generations of men on earth (note, \*Daniel 4:3).
15. that the Spirit of God can dwell in man (Daniel 4:8,9,18).
16. that God is supreme in earth (Daniel 4:17,34).
17. that God gives rule to whomsoever He will (Daniel 4:17,32).
18. that the wise men of earth are incapable of solving human problems (Daniel 2:2-13; Daniel 4:4-8).
19. that sin does not pay (Daniel 4:27-33).
20. that pride is the cause of downfalls (Daniel 4:28-37).<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> A Message of Hope from Dr. Jack Van Impe, Commentary on The Book of Daniel, Van Impe

<sup>47</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

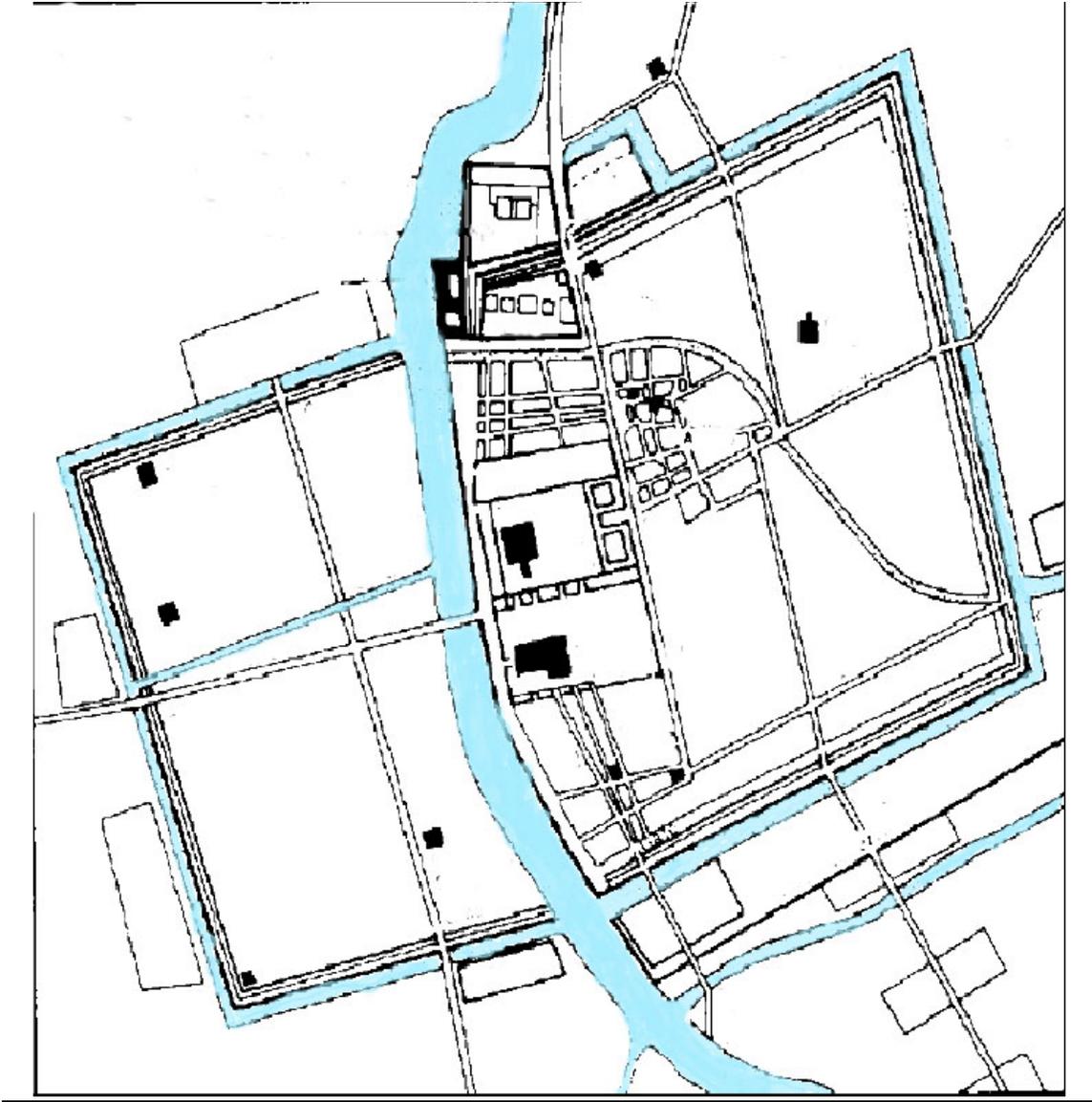


## Babylon

Origin: Gen 10:8-10, built by Nimrod, the first world dictator.

Herodotus reported that it was 15 miles square; with 350 ft. walls, 87 ft. wide (6 chariots abreast!?)

Babylon's Hanging Gardens of Semiramis = one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. Saddam Hussein offered prizes for anyone who can figure out how they were irrigated.



There was also a second wall, with a moat in between. 250 watchtowers, 100 ft above the wall; Tower of Bel (Bab-El) 600 ft! The banquet hall: 56 x 173 ft.

The magnificence of Babylon led to Nebuchadnezzar's downfall. [*And it has a prophetic destiny at the end of the age. See Chapter 5.*]

He had a major ego problem and a Babylonian inscription has been discovered that highlights this (Walvoord, p. 176, note 83):

## **Babylonian Inscription**

“I, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon,  
I am the son of Nabopolassar, King of Babylon.  
I who erected the Ezida Temple,  
I who built Procession Street,  
The Street of the Forgiven Son,  
The Street of Nebu,  
And paved it with shimmering stones.  
Nebu, you the divine minister,  
Grant me immortality.”

## **Pride**

One of the most dangerous times in life is when things are going well. Our mistakes are our lessons; our pains and sorrows are our credentials.

**(Prov 6:16-19)** *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

**(Proverbs 16:5)** *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.*

**(Proverbs 16:18)** *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

**(Proverbs 26:12)** *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*

**(Proverbs 29:23)** *A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

**(1 Corinthians 4:6-7)** *And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*

**(Philippians 2:2-8)** *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

**(James 4:13-16)** *Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoyce in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.*

God hates pride. Why? Satan's fall

**(Isaiah 14:13-14)** *For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*

### **Lycanthropy**

- (Greek: *lykos*, "wolf"; *anthropos*, "Man")
- Mental disorder in which the patient believes he is a wolf or some other animal.
- Romans: *versipellis* ("turnskin")
- Boanthropy: an ox.

Stimulated by the once widespread superstition of a supernatural condition in which men actually assume the physical form of werewolves or other animals. Psychiatric disorder and superstition is linked with belief in animal guardian spirits, vampires, totemism, witches, and werewolves. Folklore, fairy tales, and legends of many nations and peoples show evidence of lycanthropic belief. Romans called anyone who was supposed to have been turned into a wolf by means of magic spells or herbs *versipellis* ("turnskin").

Widely believed in Europe during the Middle Ages.

(*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 7:582; 18:912).

### **Other Examples**

- Raymond Harrison observed a case in British mental institution in 1946. A man in his early '20s; hospitalized for 5 years; fitted description in 4:33. [Other examples: D.H. Tuke, *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*, P.5, 752; Dr. D. R. Burrell, *American Journal of Insanity*, April, 1894, pp. 493-504.]
- Eusebius references from Abydenus, a Greek historian of 268 B.C., aspects of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity, being on the roof, and other details.
- Josephus attributes to the Babylonian historian Berosus, a Chaldean priest of the time of Alexander the Great, a definite reference concerning a strange malady suffered by Nebuchadnezzar before his death. Josephus, *Contra Apion*, I, 20 (Thackery's translation).

Berosus learned Greek, opened a school, and had Abydenus as one of his pupils. He wrote three books on Chaldean history; fragments are preserved in Josephus and Eusebius.

According to the Babylonian Talmud: care of Nebuchadnezzar during this period was provided by Daniel.

This is the last we read of Nebuchadnezzar. After his restoration, he lived about one year. Nebuchadnezzar's death was followed by a steady weakening of the regime. His son Evil-merodach succeeded him as Babylon's next ruling monarch (Jer 9:23-24).

### **“Prayer of (Nabonidus?)”: Found in Cave 4 at Qumran**

“The words of the prayer that (Nabonidus?), the king of A[ssyria and Ba]bylon, the [great] king, prayed [when he was smitten] with a malignant disease by the decree of the [Most High God] in [the city of] Tema. I was smitten for seven years and from [men] I was put away. But when I confessed my sins and my faults, He [God] allowed me (to have) a soothsayer. This was a Jewish [man of the exiles in Babylon. He] explained (it) and wrote (me) to render honor and g[reat glor]y to the name of the [Most High God]...”

There are five Aramaic words in common to both accounts:

- *pitgam*, “decree, decision”;
- *gaz rayya*, “soothsayer, diviner.”
- *nbny* in Cave 4 = Nabonidus?
- *nbnd*; confused with
- *nbkd*, Nebuchadnezzar

### **Nebuchadnezzar's Testimony**

- Nebuchadnezzar's 2nd Dream.
  - Great Tree, hewn down for 7 years.
- Daniel interprets...
- 1 Year later,
  - Nebuchadnezzar stricken with mental derangement for 7 years.
  - (Daniel was his personal nurse).
- Nebuchadnezzar recovers and publishes the entire testimony throughout the world.

### **Application**

- Immediate: Nebuchadnezzar
- Prophetic?
  - Ecumenical outreach of Babylonianism and Gentile power in the last days and final overthrow?
  - Seven years of insanity and confusion?
  - Conversion took place after the 7 years of madness.
  - The tree did not sprout again until after it had been cut down...

Acts 15:14-17; “take out” of them a people for his name... “after this I will return”...

*(Acts 15:14-17) Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.*

**(Amos 9:11,12)** *In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: {close: Heb. hedge, or, wall} That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.*

The “remnant of Edom” may refer to those who fled to Petra, etc.

**(Hosea 5:15)** *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.*

### **Nebuchadnezzar’s Successors**

- **Amel-Marduk** (“Evil-Merodach” of 2 Kgs 25:27; Jer 52:31), ruled but two years and was replaced in 560 B.C. after an army coup by the commander in chief, **Neriglissar** (Nergal-Sharezer of Jer39:3), son-inlaw of Nebuchadnezzar.
- After frequent absences from active service, **Neriglissar** (559-555 B.C.) was, in turn, ousted, and his weak son **Labashi-Marduk** lasted only a few months before another coup d’etat brought **Nabonidus** to the throne.
- Soon after his election, **Nabonidus** (553-536 B.C.) led the army to Palestine and Northern Arabia, leaving his son Belshazzar as co-regent in Babylon. Nabonidus’ decision to stay in Arabia resulted from his unpopularity at home as much as from his desire to found a settlement there with exiles from Palestine.

### **Conclusion - Deffinbaugh**

This lesson was a very personal and private intervention of God in the life of king Nebuchadnezzar, bringing him to his knees first in humiliation and then in praise. But it is a lesson for all, and thus the king makes his testimony a matter of public record, even though it does not flatter him. What lessons can we learn from this text? Along with your own thoughts, consider these:

**(1) Pride is a form of insanity.** Nebuchadnezzar’s experience highlights and illustrates an important principle in the relationship between pride and insanity. Pride is actually a form of insanity. Insanity is a condition in which one loses touch with reality, living in an unreal world. Sanity is seeing things as they are and then living appropriately.

I believe our text indicates that Nebuchadnezzar’s pride was insane. His chastening allowed his insanity to ripen and come into full bloom. Holding too high an opinion of oneself and lightly regarding the glory of God is insane. When one fails to live up to his or her capacity and calling as created by God, we are no better than the beasts of the field. The king’s sin made a beast of him. And so does all sin in each of us (see Psalm 73:22; Romans 1:18-32).

**(2) Worship is man’s highest calling, setting him apart from the beasts of the field and giving him the basis for sanity.** If the king’s self-congratulations were the cause of his humiliation, his worship was the turning point for the return of his sanity and his restoration to power. *Worship is man’s highest calling.* It sets men apart from the beasts. Worship sees God for who He is and man for who he is, and thus life as it truly is.

Worship is the foundation for sanity. When men failed to worship God, they began their fall and became no better and little different from the beasts (Romans 1:18-32). Worship turns men to God in humility, gratitude, and worship, based upon the wonder of His grace. Worship is the way to wisdom, because it humbles us and exalts God.

**(3) Our worship is directly related to our witness.** Daniel chapter 4 is actually king Nebuchadnezzar's personal testimony. He endeavors to share with others what God has taught him. Witnessing should be to the praise and glory of God. It should be an act of worship. Whether those who hear our witness turn to faith in God, God has been publicly praised in and by our witness. Too many people share their faith only as a duty and not as a delight. Their witness is not the overflow of a grateful heart, done as to the Lord, but a painful duty. We should learn how to worship and witness from this Babylonian king.

**(4) Salvation should not be separated from the sovereignty of God.** Recently, growing debate has surfaced over the issue of "lordship salvation." I do not wish to reopen the debate or to take sides with the major spokesmen. I do believe that *salvation is by grace, apart from works*. But I also believe that our passage teaches the importance of the lordship (sovereignty) of God to the doctrine of salvation. The doctrine of God's sovereignty was king Nebuchadnezzar's principle obstacle. In our fallen state, we are proud, arrogant, and self-sufficient. We neither want nor accept grace. Grace is that which is extended to the helpless and the needy. Pride admits no needs, and oppresses the needy.

When the king praised God for His sovereignty, he was restored to his sanity and power. I believe it was also at this time that he was saved. While the point of the passage is not the conversion of this king, I do not think we can avoid acknowledging the radical change in this man's life. How can an unsaved man utter the praises which come from the lips of Nebuchadnezzar? How many unbelieving kings would share the testimony of their pride and subsequent downfall as Nebuchadnezzar has done? This man seems to have come to faith in God through the events of chapter 4, and the crucial issue seems to be the sovereignty of God.

How then can we think that the sovereignty of God is not vital to evangelism and the conversion of the lost? Is the sovereignty of God something of such minor import that it can be put off until a later time, after the unbeliever has come to faith? I think not. The fall of man occurred because men failed to acknowledge and abide by the authority of God. The crucial issue which divided Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders was His authority. *One cannot knowingly reject the sovereignty of God and come to Him for salvation.* To come to Jesus for salvation is to come to Him as Lord. Those who have rejected Him in life will, before the throne, acknowledge Him as Lord. *Jesus is Lord!* Salvation is based upon this vital truth, for the Lord is the one who died and rose again, for our deliverance. The One who has all power is the One who has the power to save men from their sins.

**(5) Authority is not a position of status but a place of service.** There has always been an unbiblical, ungodly view of power. Jesus referred to this mindset as typical of the Gentiles. Unfortunately, it also characterized the Jews, and even the disciples of our Lord:

**(Mark 10:35-45)** *35 And James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Him, saying to Him, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You." 36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" 37 And they said to Him, "Grant that we may sit in Your glory, one on Your right, and one on Your left." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" 39 And they said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. 40 "But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." 41 And hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant toward James and John. 42 And calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. 43 But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

The Gentiles view power and authority as the basis for being served. Men seek to rise to positions of power and authority so that others under them might serve them. So it was with Nebuchadnezzar. But God places men in authority so that they may *serve* those under them. *Leadership is not characterized by status but by service and self-sacrifice.* Our Lord exercised authority in this way, and it should be the way of his followers:

**(1 Peter 5:1-6)** *1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow-elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock, 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time ...*

Power is a gift of grace, not a reward for merit. It is given to make men strong so they may serve the weak. Power is never given to bolster the ego of one who is divinely strengthened or enabled. These truths apply to those in leadership, but also to every Christian. Every Christian is divinely empowered with a spiritual gift or gifts to serve others, ultimately serving our Lord. None should be prideful and glory in his gift because

of the abilities God has given. Rather, we should be grateful, humble, and alert for opportunities to use our strengths to minister to those who are weak.

**(6) The lesson God had for Nebuchadnezzar also applied to the Jews.** God raised up Nebuchadnezzar to power and position. God gave king Jehoiakim and the other captive kings into Nebuchadnezzar's hands (see Daniel 1:1). Nebuchadnezzar was successful and rose to power by the grace of God, not due to his own merit (see Daniel 4:17). When he became proud and took credit for divine grace, God humbled him—not to destroy him but to deliver him, to make of him a humble and grateful worshipper. Humiliation was ultimately God means of exalting the king. What appeared to be his destruction became the means of his deliverance. To be restored, the king must repent, acknowledge the sovereignty of God, and demonstrate his repentance by showing forth righteousness in being merciful to the poor.

Nebuchadnezzar's rise and fall almost exactly mirrors the rise, fall, and restoration of the nation Israel. Israel was not chosen because of her greatness or potential. She was chosen in spite of her weakness and insignificance, to serve God and bring glory to Him. When God made this people a great nation in Egypt and was about to bring them into the blessings of Canaan, He warned them of the danger of pride, cautioning them about taking credit for His grace (see Deuteronomy 6-8). He warned them of His chastening if they failed to obey His laws, to worship Him alone, and to care for the poor and the oppressed (see Deuteronomy 28).

Israel failed to heed these warnings and those of later prophets, just as Nebuchadnezzar failed to heed the warning of his dream from Daniel. And so this nation was humbled by defeat and captivity. This nation, which was to exercise authority in the name of God, was removed from authority. They were scattered among the nations, as Nebuchadnezzar was put among the beasts of the field. Just as Nebuchadnezzar was delivered by acknowledging God's sovereignty and grace, and by worshipping Him, so the Israelites would be delivered and restored.

The story of Nebuchadnezzar's elevation, humiliation, and restoration should have given hope to the nation Israel, for just as he was put down and later restored, so would they be. The restoration of this Gentile king was recorded to give hope to the humbled, captives of Judah, who would also be restored to their position of leadership in God's economy.

**(7) Sooner or later, all mankind will be humbled before God and acknowledge His sovereignty.** Nebuchadnezzar bowed before God after seven years of humiliation. He became a worshipper of the One true God. He will continue to worship and serve God for all eternity. What Nebuchadnezzar did many years ago, every man and woman will do in the future. All mankind will acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. Some Jews and Gentiles will do so by professing faith in Him as Savior and Lord:

**(Acts 2:34-36)** 34 *“For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 35 UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET’ ‘ 36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”*

**(Romans 10:8-11)** *8 But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART” — that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; 10 for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation, 11 For the Scriptures says, “WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”.*

After death, those who reject Jesus as Savior and Lord will not be given another chance to choose Him as Savior. But they will be required to acknowledge Him as LORD:

**(Philippians 2:5-11)** *5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

I must now ask you the most important question you will ever answer: “What have you done with Jesus Christ?” Have you trusted in Him as Savior and Lord? I am not speaking about mere intellectual assent. Years before the events of Daniel chapter 4 Nebuchadnezzar had recognized the wisdom and the power of the God of Israel. But he had not placed his trust in Him. I am not asking if you know **about** God. I am asking if you have come **personally** to trust in Him, to love Him, and to worship Him. Your response to the Lord Jesus Christ is the most important issue of your life.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1995

## Appendix A: Thirty-four Dreams of Scripture (Dake)

1. Abimelech, of Sarah (Genesis 20:3)
2. Jacob, of a ladder (Genesis 28:12)
3. Jacob, of ring-straked cattle (Genesis 31:10-13)
4. Jacob, of Egypt (Genesis 46:2)
5. Laban, of Jacob (Genesis 31:24)
6. Joseph, of brethren (Genesis 37:5)
7. Joseph, of brethren (Genesis 37:9)
8. Chief butler, of himself (Genesis 40:9)
9. Chief baker, of himself (Genesis 40:16)
10. Pharaoh, of famine (Genesis 41:1-4)
11. Pharaoh, of famine (Genesis 41:5-8)
12. A Midianite, of Gideon (Judges 7:13)
13. Solomon, of wisdom (1 Kings 3:3-15)
14. Eliphaz, of a spirit (Job 4:12-21)
15. Job, of terror (Job 7:14)
16. Nebuchadnezzar, of kingdoms (Daniel 2)
17. Nebuchadnezzar, of himself (Daniel 4)
18. Daniel, of kingdoms (Daniel 7)
19. Daniel, of kingdoms (Daniel 8)
20. Daniel, of God (Daniel 10:5-9)
21. False prophets, of lies (Jeremiah 23:27-32; Jeremiah 29:8)
22. Diviners, of false things (Zech. 10:2)
23. Joseph, of Mary (Matthew 1:20)
24. Joseph, of flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:13)
25. Joseph, of returning home (Matthew 2:19)
26. Joseph, of Herod (Matthew 2:22)
27. The wise men, of warning (Matthew 2:12)
28. Pilate's wife, of Jesus (Matthew 27:19)
29. Cornelius, of an angel (Acts 10:3-6)
30. Peter, of animals (Acts 10:10-16)
31. Paul, of a man (Acts 16:9)
32. Paul, of going to Rome (Acts 23:11)
33. Paul, of safety (Acts 28:23-24)
34. John, of Christ (Rev. 1:12-18)<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

## Appendix B: The Trinity (Dake)

Eighteen Fallacies:

1. That there is only one Person or one Being called "God."
2. That there is a difference in meaning of three human Persons and three divine persons.
3. That the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit refer to three manifestations of one Person or one Being.
4. That the Father is the only Person who is divine; the Son was created by the Father; and the Holy Spirit was created by the Son (Arianism).
5. That God consists of three Persons in one Person or three Beings in one Being.
6. That the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are essential parts of one Being, just as man is made up of body, soul, and spirit.
7. That God is a complex Person and so it is folly to seek to explain the Trinity.
8. That the Trinity is beyond human comprehension and bewilders the most learned.
9. That the Trinity is not an Old Testament revelation.
10. That God has no body, physical parts, or passions like human beings—nothing of a bodily nature.
11. That God is invisible reality and cannot be seen by natural eyes.
12. That God is a universal mind, conscience, love, goodness, and power filling all space and matter.
13. That there is nothing on earth to resemble Him.
14. That God cannot be comprehended by the senses but by the soul, for He is above sense perceptions.
15. The image of God consists only of moral and spiritual likeness.
16. That all statements of God having a body with physical parts are mere figures of speech conveying some idea of God to man (see Anthropomorphism).
17. That Jesus Christ is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
18. That Jesus is the one God and Jehovah of the Old Testament.

All such statements are unscriptural in the extreme and are contradicted by thousands of plain passages about God. Why would God tell us that all invisible things are clearly seen by visible things on earth, even to His eternal power and Godhead (Romans 1:20), if He is incomprehensible; if there is nothing on earth to resemble Him; if He is a bodiless being; if He is three beings in one being; if His image is only moral and spiritual; if descriptions of His body and physical parts are not true and real; and if He is an invisible nothingness floating in nowhere? If this is what God is, why did He not say this instead of what He did say? Is it possible that He does not speak to us in plain human language? Or, is it more reasonable that the church and false religions are in error and that God does mean what He says about Himself? Who gave man the right to change the Bible from a literal to an imaginative meaning? If statements about God are mere figures of speech trying to convey some idea of Him, what ideas do they convey? That He does not have a body with physical parts, or that He does? That He is less real than His creations, or that He is as real? It would be unlike God to say over 20,000 things about Himself if He did not have a personal body, soul and spirit as stated.

## Eighty-nine Proofs of A Divine Trinity:

What we mean by Divine Trinity is that there are three separate and distinct persons in the Godhead, each one having His own personal spirit body, personal soul, and personal spirit in the same sense each human being, angel, or any other being has his own body, soul, and spirit. We mean by body, whether a spirit body or a flesh body, the house for the indwelling of the personal soul and spirit. The soul is that which feels and the spirit is that which knows.

The doctrine of the Trinity can be clearly seen, being understood by the visible things that are made, even to His eternal power and Godhead (Romans 1:20). What on earth was created in the image and likeness of God? Man (Genesis 1:26-28). Do God's image and likeness consist only of moral and spiritual powers? If so, it can be concluded that man is only a moral and spiritual being. Is God bodiless? If so, we can conclude that man is also bodiless.

Is God only one being made up of several persons or beings in the one being? If so, we can conclude that man is one person or being made up of many. Does God need a flesh body in order to have any kind of body? No! There are such things as spirit and heavenly bodies. See 1 Cor. 15:35-38. From this passage we learn that all things in creation—grain, fish, birds, beasts, man, angels, and even the planets—have bodies, sizes, shapes, and forms.

The Bible declares that God has a body, shape, image, likeness, physical parts, a personal soul and spirit, and all other things that constitute a being or a person with a body, soul, and spirit (see note, "John 4:24; note, "John 5:37; The Doctrine of Man.

Angels, cherubim, seraphim, and all other spirit beings have spirit bodies and personal souls and spirits. They have been seen with the natural eyes of men over 100 times in Scripture (see Appearances of Angels to Men). If all other spirit beings have spirit bodies, could not the members of the Trinity also have spirit bodies? The 284 passages on spirits in Scripture prove that spirit bodies are just as real and capable of operation in the material worlds as are flesh bodies. There is no such thing as a world of creations made up of invisible substance. The so-called spirit world must be understood simply as spirit beings inhabiting material worlds created by God. Heaven itself is a material planet (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:10-16), having cities, mansions, furniture, inhabitants, living conditions, etc. See Heaven.

God has been seen physically by human eyes many times (Genesis 18:1-33; Genesis 19:24; Genesis 32:24-30; Exodus 24:11; Exodus 33:11-33; Joshua 5:13-15; Judges 6:11-23; Judges 13:3-25; 1 Chron. 21:16-17; Job 42:5; Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1:26-28; Ezekiel 10:1,20; Ezekiel 40:3; Daniel 7:9-14; Daniel 10:5-10; Acts 7:56-59; Rev. 4:2-5; Rev. 5:1,5-7,11-14; Rev. 6:16; Rev. 7:9-17; Rev. 19:4; Rev. 21:3-5; Rev. 22:4).

In over 20,000 references about God in Scripture we get to know all we need to know about the subject. If we will take the Bible literally as to what it says about Him, as we do with other things the subject will be very clear; but if we make God a mystery, ignoring the plain statements of Scripture about Him, and refusing to believe the many descriptions of God given by those who have seen one, two, and three separate persons called "God," then we will remain in ignorance.

It is true there are a few figurative statements about God in Scripture, as there are about man and other things, but shall we do away with the reality of man and these other things because of a few figures of speech? Let us make man mere salt and lights (Matthew 5:13-14), if we are going to do away with God because of a few figures of speech.

We submit the following facts in Scripture to prove a Divine Trinity of separate persons in the Godhead:

1. The word "one" means one in unity as well as one in number. It means unity in 1 John 5:7, as it does in John 17:11,21-23, and yet these three Persons, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, are spoken of as one each in number and individuality in Scripture. There is one God the Father, one Lord Jesus Christ, and one Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 8:6; Ephes. 4:3-6). Thus, there are three separate Persons in divine individuality and divine plurality. The Father is called God (1 Cor. 8:6), the Son is called God (Isaiah 9:6,7; Hebrews 1:8; John 1:1-2; John 20:28), and the Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5:3-4). As individual persons each can be called God and collectively they can be spoken of as one God because of their perfect unity. The word "God" is used either as a singular or a plural word, like sheep.

Everything that could be spoken of God collectively applies equally to each member of the Godhead as an individual, but there are some things that are said of each person of the Deity as to position, office, and work that could not be spoken as of the other members of the Godhead. The Father is the head of Christ (1 Cor. 11:3); the Son is the only begotten of the Father (2 John 1:3), and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son (John 14:16,26; John 15:26; John 16:7-15; Acts 2:34).

2. Names of God prove plurality of persons. The Hebrew:  $\square$ Ελοηιμ (HSN-430) is the word for God in Genesis 1:1 and in over 2,700 other places in the Old Testament. It is a uni-plural noun meaning Gods and is so translated 239 times (Genesis 3:5; Exodus 22:28; 1 Samuel 4:8; Daniel 2:11; Daniel 4:6-9; Daniel 5:11,14; etc.). Sometimes 'Elohiym is used with plural verbs and pronouns, "the Gods they caused me to wander" (Genesis 20:13), and "there the Gods they appeared unto him" (Genesis 35:7).

3. Plural pronouns are used of God, proving plurality of persons (Genesis 1:26; Genesis 3:22; Genesis 11:7; Isaiah 6:8; John 14:23; John 17:11,22-23).

4. First, second, and third personal pronouns are used hundreds of times in Scripture, referring to one, two, and three persons of the Godhead in the same sense they are used of men. Sometimes the different members of the Deity use them to and of one another in the same sense man uses them. In John 17 alone Jesus uses them 162 times in speaking to and of His Father (cp. John 14:16-17,26; John 15:26; John 16:7-15). Sometimes singular pronouns are used of the whole Godhead of three members as a unity (Exodus 20:3; Isaiah 44:6,8; Isaiah 45:5,21; Isaiah 46:9; Hosea 13:4), just like the whole church as a unit is spoken of as a man and "he" (Ephes. 2:14-15; Ephes. 4:13; Ephes. 5:25-27; 2 Thes. 2:7-8).

5. "Man is become as one of us" proves plurality of persons (Genesis 3:22).

6. Two and three Persons called God have been seen by the same men at the same time and places as being separate persons (Daniel 7:9-14; Matthew 3:16-17; John 1:31-34; Acts 7:54-60; Rev. 6:16; Rev. 7:9-17; Rev. 21:22; Rev. 22:3).

7. Two Lords are mentioned in Genesis 19:24; one on earth and one in heaven.
8. Two Persons are referred to in the Old Testament See Psalm 8:5-6 with Hebrews 2:5-18; Psalm 16:8-10 with Acts 2:25-36; Psalm 22:1-22 with Matthew 27:35,39-43,45-46; Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:5-12; Psalm 40:6-10 with Hebrews 10:5-7; and Psalm 45:6-7 with Hebrews 1:8-9.
9. Two Lords are mentioned sitting side by side (Psalm 110:1,5; Matthew 22:44; Matthew 26:64; Acts 2:33-34; Acts 7:54-56; Romans 8:34; Ephes. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Hebrews 1:3,13; Hebrews 8:1; Hebrews 10:12; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22; Rev. 22:3).
10. Two Persons are mentioned and required in order to understand the plain language of Psalm 2; Psalm 9:19; Psalm 132:17; Proverbs 30:4; Isaiah 4:2; Isaiah 10:16-17; Isaiah 28:16; Isaiah 49:1-10; Isaiah 50:4-11; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Isaiah 62:11; Micah 5:1-5; Jeremiah 23:4-8; Jeremiah 33:14-26; Zech. 3:8-10; Zech. 6:12-13. In these passages one is anointed, becomes the son of, is sent by, is taught by, and becomes the servant of the other; and both are called Lord.
11. Three self-acting Persons—the Lord God, the Messiah, and the Holy Spirit—are referred to as blessing, anointing, sending, and doing things for one another in Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 42:1-7; Isaiah 48:16; Isaiah 59:21; Isaiah 61:1-2; Isaiah 63:1-14; Zech. 12:10-13:2.
12. In Zech. 1:7-21 the Lord of Hosts and the angel of the Lord (also called Lord, Zech. 1:19-20; Zech. 2:1-13) are talking together. One Lord says of the other Lord that He has sent Him to Israel (Zech. 2:8-13). One Lord refers to Himself as "Me" and to the Lord of Hosts as "His" and "He" (Zech. 2:8-11). The conference continues throughout Zechariah until Zech. 13:6-7 where both Lords are called fellows or associate.
13. Jesus Christ is called the son of Abraham, David, Mary, and of God (Matthew 1:1; Mark 1:1; Mark 6:3). He is just as much a separate person from God as He is of these other persons.
14. Two Persons are referred to many times in the New Testament (Matthew 11:27; Luke 23:46; John 1:1-2,18; John 5:19-20; John 14:1-9; John 16:15; John 17:3,10; Acts 2:38-39; Acts 3:13-26; Phil. 2:5-11; Ephes. 3:5; Col. 1:5; 2 Thes. 2:16-17; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:1-3; Rev. 20:6; Rev. 22:3).
15. Two and three Persons are mentioned in the introductions to New Testament books (Romans 1:1-4,7; 1 Cor. 1:3; James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1-3; 2 John 1:3; Rev. 1:1-6; etc.).
16. God is the head of Christ and thus greater than He in position (1 Cor. 3:23; 1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Chron. 29:11; John 14:28).
17. Christ is the mediator between God and man, not between Himself and man (1 Tim. 2:5).
18. Two and three Persons are referred to in every New Testament book (Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 12:31-32; Matthew 17:5; Matthew 22:43-45; Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:1-2,10; Mark 13:32; Luke 1:32-35; Luke 2:40,52; Luke 3:22; Luke 4:1; Luke 4:18; Luke 9:35; Luke 23:46; Luke 24:39 with John 4:24; John 1:1-3,14,18; John 5:17-25,31-38; John 6:37,44-46,57; John 7:16-18,28,37-39; John 8:13-19,26-38,42,54; John 10:15-18,24,29,36; John 12:26-31,44,49-50; John 14:1-26,28-30; John 15:1-26; John 16:1-33; John 17:1-26; John 18:11; John 20:17,21; John 18:11; John 20:17,21; Acts 1:7-8; Acts 2:24-36; Acts 3:13-26; Acts 4:10,26-31; Acts 5:29-33; Acts 7:37,55-

56; Acts 8:12-17; Acts 9:17; Acts 10:38-48; Acts 17:31; Romans 1:3,7,9; Romans 5:1-11; Romans 8:1-13,26-39; 1 Cor. 1:3-9; 1 Cor. 2:10; 1 Cor. 3:23; 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Cor. 12:3; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 1:2-3; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; 2 Cor. 13:14; Galatians 1:1-3; Ephes. 1:2-3; Ephes. 3:14; Ephes. 4:3-6; Ephes. 6:23; Phil. 1:2; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:2-3,13-19; Col. 3:1; 1 Thes. 1:1-10; 1 Thes. 3:13; 2 Thes. 1:1-2; 2 Thes. 2:16; 1 Tim. 1:2; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 Tim. 5:21; 1 Tim. 6:14-16; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 4:1; Titus 1:4; Titus 2:13; Philemon 1:3; see note, "Rev. 5:13 for 30 last New Testament references). In no conceivable way can we force a meaning of three persons in one person; three beings in one being; or three manifestations of only one person in any of these or any other scripture.

19. There are three distinct and separate witnesses that bear witness of Christ (1 John 5:5-11,13,20). Both God and man require this many personal and separate witnesses to confirm any point (Matthew 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1). The water and blood of 1 John 5:8 could not be accepted as accredited personal witnesses to confirm any point (Matthew 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1). The water and blood of 1 John 5:8 could not be accepted as accredited personal witness in themselves. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the only personal witnesses of this passage. If we consider these to be only one person, then there are not the required number of witnesses to establish the truth of the Sonship of Jesus Christ. We are forced by facts to admit all of 1 John 5:7-8 as inspired Scripture and therefore, the fact that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three separate and personal witnesses instead of being only one person or witness. Indeed, many scriptures confirm these three witnesses:

- (1) The Father (Jeremiah 29:23; Malachi 3:5; \*John 5:31-37, notes; Romans 1:9; Hebrews 1:1-2; Hebrews 2:3-4)
- (2) The Son (Isaiah 55:4; John 18:37; 1 Tim. 6:13; Rev. 1:5)
- (3) The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16; John 15:26; Hebrews 10:15; 1 John 3:6)

If all three are witnesses, then they must be separate Persons. The water and the blood simply confirm the intelligent testimonies of the three Persons of the Godhead and give additional weight to the Sonship of Jesus.

20. The words through and by, used of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, but not once of the Father, prove that God to be a separate Person and the Head and Director of all things done by and through them (1 Cor. 3:23; 1 Cor. 11:3; John 10:29; John 14:28; John 14:16-17,26; John 15:26; John 16:7-15; Acts 2:33-34):

- (1) Through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:2; Romans 1:8; Romans 5:1,9,11; Romans 6:23; Romans 7:25; Romans 15:17; Romans 16:27; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 3:4; Galatians 3:14; Galatians 4:7; Galatians 5:10; Ephes. 2:7,18; Phil. 4:7,13; Titus 3:6; Hebrews 13:21; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 Peter 4:11; 1 John 4:9)
- (2) By Jesus Christ (John 1:3,10,17; John 10:9; Acts 4:10; Acts 10:36; Romans 2:16; Romans 3:22; Romans 5:17,21; Galatians 1:1; Ephes. 1:5; Ephes. 3:9; Col. 1:15-20; Col. 3:17; Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Peter 5:10)
- (3) Through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2; Acts 21:4; Romans 8:13; Romans 15:13,19; Galatians 5:5; Ephes. 2:22; Hebrews 9:14)
- (4) By the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 11:24; Micah 3:8; Zech. 4:6; Matthew 12:28; Luke 2:27; Luke 4:1; Acts 11:28; Romans 5:5; Romans 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:10; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Cor. 12:3,13)

Proofs that Jesus Is Not the Father:

21. The Father was in heaven all the time that Jesus was on earth (Matthew 5:16,48).
22. Christ now sits at the right hand of the Father (see note 9, above).
23. Jesus said He would confess men "before My Father," proving He is not the Father (Matthew 10:32; Rev. 3:5).
24. Jesus always prayed to the Father as a separate Person (Matthew 11:25; John 17).
25. The Father existed outside the body of Jesus, so He could not be Jesus (Matthew 2:12; Matthew 3:17; Matthew 17:5; John 12:27-30).
26. Both Jesus and Satan refer to a God separate from Jesus (Matthew 4:6-10).
27. God was the Father of Jesus, not Jesus Himself (Ephes. 1:3,17; Ephes. 3:14).
28. In parables Jesus illustrates His relationship to the Father as that of separate persons (Matthew 21:33-46; John 15:1-8).
29. People are taught to go directly to the Father and not to pray to Jesus (John 14:12-15; John 15:16; John 16:23-26).
30. The Father knew things that Jesus did not know (Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7).
31. Others saw Jesus as a separate Person from the Father (Daniel 7:9-14; Acts 7:56).
32. Jesus committed His own spirit to the Father, not to Himself (Luke 23:46).
33. Jesus claimed that He came from God and was going back to God (John 8:42; John 16:5; John 10:36; John 17:8).
34. God is a Spirit, not flesh and blood like Jesus was (John 4:24; John 19:34; Matthew 16:17; Luke 24:39).
35. People on earth with Jesus heard God speak as a separate person from heaven (Matthew 3:17; Matthew 17:5; 2 Peter 1:16-18).
36. Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, not the Father Himself (John 5:17-35).
37. Jesus called the Father "My God," even after the resurrection (John 20:17; Rev. 3:12).
38. Jesus called God "My Father" 57 times (John 15:1; Rev. 2:27). How could He be His own God and Father and beget Himself?
39. When Jesus was born on earth angels and people still recognized God in heaven (Luke 2:7-16). Were they mistaken about God? Was the child all of God on earth and in heaven also?
40. Mary and Joseph acted with utmost ignorance if the baby Jesus was all of God, for they presented Him to the Lord Who was someone other than Jesus (Luke 2:22).
41. Simeon had a revelation and guidance from the Holy Spirit that Jesus was not the only member of the Godhead (Luke 2:26-33).
42. John the Baptist knew the Father, but he did not know the Son (John 1:31-34).
43. The Son died, not the Father (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24).
44. Jesus was the only begotten Son of the Father, so could not be the Father or the begetter of Himself (John 1:14).
45. Jesus claimed that He could not and did not do anything of Himself, but that the Father worked through Him (John 5:19,30; John 6:38; John 8:28; John 12:49-50).
46. He did not come to do His own will, but that of the Father who sent Him (John 5:30; John 6:38).
47. His doctrine was not His, but the Father's (John 7:16-17; John 8:26).
48. He did not speak of Himself, but of the Father who had sent Him (John 7:16-18; John 8:26-40).

49. He did not please Himself, but the Father (John 8:29).
50. He was a Son, not a Father over the house of God (John 8:35-36; Hebrews 3:6).
51. He had the same relation to His Father that men have with Satan (John 8:16,35-44; John 9:4).
52. He honored the Father as all people should (John 8:49).
53. He did not seek His own glory, but that of the Father (John 8:50-54; John 17:4).
54. He knew the Father, but was not the Father (John 8:55; John 10:15).
55. He was loved by the Father as a separate person (John 10:17-18).
56. He kept the Father's commandments and they were not His own (John 12:49-50; John 15:10).
57. His disciples were given to Him by the Father (John 10:29; John 17:1-25).
58. He was equal with the Father in some things, but not in others (Mark 13:32; John 5:17-39; John 8:13-19,29-42; John 19:18-29; Acts 1:7; 1 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 1:1).
59. He and the Father were in unity and in each other in the same sense believers are to be in unity and in God (John 10:38; John 14:10-11,23; John 17:11,21-23).
60. He was the only way to the Father (John 6:37; John 14:6).
61. He said, I am not alone or the only witness of My sonship. The Father is another witness (John 5:36-38; John 8:13-19,54; John 12:49-50; John 14:10-11).
62. Over 80 times Jesus affirmed that He was not the Father and not the only person in the Godhead. Christ was the speaker, but not the one spoken of or to (Matthew 7:21; Matthew 11:27; Matthew 18:10,35; Luke 2:49; John 5:17-43; John 8:19-49; John 10:17-37; John 14:7-28; John 15:1-26; Rev. 1:1; etc.). Is it any wonder that the Godhead, the Trinity, and the unity of God are so mysterious when we force separate persons to become only one person, all because we do not want to recognize the true meaning of the word one as referring to unity rather than individuality in some scriptures? People would be just as great a mystery if we forced the meaning of all men to refer to one person.
63. He was not as great as His Father (John 10:29; John 14:28; cp. 1 Cor. 11:3).
64. The Father (Matthew 3:17), Jesus (John 10:36), angels (Luke 1:32-35), demons (Mark 3:11; Mark 5:7), and apostles (Matthew 16:16; John 1:14; Romans 8:32; 2 John 1:3), all declare the sonship of Jesus, but not once do they declare a Christ-fatherhood.
65. The Father and the Son spoke to each other in audible voices at the same time and place, being heard by many witnesses (Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 7:5; John 12:27-30; 2 Peter 1:17). In no single instance could such speaking be explained as the voice of one individual or be used to prove one Person in the Deity.
66. The word "both" is used of the Father and the Son, proving two Persons (John 15:24; 2 John 1:9).
67. The word "also" is used of the Father and the Son, proving two Persons (John 5:19,27; John 8:19; John 13:32; John 14:1).
68. The statement, "They have not known the Father nor Me," proves two Persons (John 16:3,5).
69. Christ received all power in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18). The Father had to be greater than Jesus to give Him that power (John 14:28).
70. Jesus was resurrected and exalted by the Father, so He could not be the Father (Ephes. 1:20-23; Phil. 2:9-11; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22)

71. God made Jesus both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:33-36).

72. Six times in John 14:1-9 Jesus made it clear that He was not the Father.

Holy Spirit Is Not Jesus Or the Father:

73. The Holy Spirit is another Person, distinct from both the Father and the Son (John 5:32; John 14:16-17,26; John 15:26; John 16:7-15).

74. It was necessary that Jesus go away so that the Holy Spirit could come (John 16:5-15).

75. He has been seen with the natural eyes as a separate Person from the Father and the Son (Matthew 3:16-17; John 1:31-34; Rev. 4:5; Rev. 5:6).

76. He is symbolized as a separate Person with Christ, both of them before God who sits on a throne (Rev. 1:4-5; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 4:5; Rev. 5:6).

77. He could not be sent from God until Christ was glorified, but would then be sent from both the Father and the Son (John 7:37-39; Acts 2:33-34).

78. He was sent from the Father to endow Jesus with power. This required three Persons: the One who sent Him, the One being sent, and the One who received Him (Acts 10:38; Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 42:1-7; Isaiah 61:1-2).

79. A clear distinction is made of the names of all three Persons (Matthew 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 5:7).

80. A clear distinction is made between the Son who prays, the Father to whom He prays, and the Holy Spirit for whom He prays (John 14:16).

81. A clear distinction is made between the Son on the right hand of the Father, the Father on the left hand of the Son, and the Holy Spirit who is sent from the Father and the Son (Acts 2:33-36; Acts 7:56; John 14:16-17,26; John 15:26; John 16:7-15).

82. The Son was already given (John 3:16), when the Spirit was not yet given (John 7:39).

83. The Son can be blasphemed with forgiveness possible; but if the Spirit is blasphemed, no forgiveness is possible. This proves two distinct Persons (Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:29-30; Luke 12:10).

84. The Samaritans received Jesus, but had not yet received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:5-25).

85. Jesus could do no miracle by Himself (John 5:19), but by the Holy Spirit He did many miracles (John 2:11; Acts 10:38)

86. The Holy Spirit came not to speak of or glorify Himself, but to speak of and glorify Jesus (John 16:7-15).

87. The descent of the Holy Spirit proved the arrival of Jesus in heaven to sit at the right hand of God, thus proving three Persons (Acts 2:33-34; John 7:39).

88. Jesus claimed even after the resurrection that He was not a spirit being, so He could not be the Father or the Holy Spirit who are spirit beings (Luke 24:39; John 4:24; John 14:16-17,26; John 15:26; John 16:7-15).

89. In the last book of the Bible the Trinity is seen as working together in all things (Rev. 1:4-6; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 4:5; Rev. 5:6; Rev. 21:10; Rev. 22:17).<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

## Appendix C: Twelve Forbidden Practices (Dake)

1. Enchantments—practice of magical arts (Exodus 7:11,22; Exodus 8:7,18; Leviticus 19:26; Deut. 18:10; 2 Chron. 33:6; 2 Kings 17:17; 2 Kings 21:6; Isaiah 47:9,12; Jeremiah 27:9; Daniel 1:20)
2. Witchcraft—practice of dealing with evil spirits (Exodus 22:18; Deut. 18:10; 1 Samuel 15:23; 2 Chron. 33:6; 2 Kings 9:22; Micah 5:12; Nahum 3:4; Galatians 5:19-21)
3. Sorcery—same as witchcraft (Exodus 7:11; Isaiah 47:9,12; Isaiah 57:3; Jeremiah 27:9; Daniel 2:2; Malachi 3:5; Acts 8:9-11; Acts 13:6-8; Rev. 9:21; Rev. 18:23; Rev. 21:8; Rev. 22:15)
4. Soothsaying—same as witchcraft (Isaiah 2:6; Daniel 2:27; Daniel 4:7; Daniel 5:7,11; Micah 5:12)
5. Divination—the art of mystic insight or fortunetelling (Numbers 22:7; Numbers 23:23; Deut. 18:10-14; 2 Kings 17:17; 1 Samuel 6:2; Jeremiah 14:14; Jeremiah 27:9; Jeremiah 29:8; Ezekiel 12:24; Ezekiel 13:6-7,23; Ezekiel 21:22-29; Ezekiel 22:28; Micah 3:7; Zech. 10:2; Acts 16:16)
6. Wizardry—same as witchcraft. A wizard is a male and a witch is a female who practices witchcraft. Both were to be destroyed in Israel (Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:31; Leviticus 20:6,27; Deut. 18:11; 1 Samuel 28:3,9; 2 Kings 21:6; 2 Kings 23:24; 2 Chron. 33:6; Isaiah 19:3)
7. Necromancy—divination by means of pretended communication with the dead (Deut. 18:11; Isaiah 8:19; 1 Samuel 28; 1 Chron. 10:13)
8. Magic—any pretended supernatural art or practice (Genesis 41:8,24; Exodus 7:11,22; Exodus 8:7,18-19; Exodus 9:11; Daniel 1:20; Daniel 2:2,10,27; Daniel 4:7,9; Daniel 5:11; Acts 19:19)
9. Charm—to put a spell upon (same as enchantment, Deut. 18:11; Isaiah 19:3)
10. Prognostication—to foretell by indications, omens, signs, etc. (Isaiah 47:13)
11. Observing times—same as prognostication (Leviticus 19:26; Deut. 18:10; 2 Kings 21:6; 2 Chron. 33:6)
12. Astrology and star gazing—divination by stars (Isaiah 47:13; Jeremiah 10:2; Daniel 1:20; Daniel 2:2,10; Daniel 4:7; Daniel 5:7-15)

All the above practices were and still are carried on in connection with demons, called familiar spirits. All who forsook God and sought help from these demons were to be destroyed (Leviticus 19:31; Leviticus 20:6; Deut. 18:11; 1 Samuel 28; 2 Kings 21:6; 2 Kings 23:24; 1 Chron. 10:13; 2 Chron. 33:6; Isaiah 8:19; Isaiah 19:3; Isaiah 29:4. See 1 Tim. 4:1-8; 2 Thes. 2:8-12; Matthew 24:24; Rev. 13; Rev. 16:13-16; Rev. 19:20).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible