

Daniel 4 (TAC)

Tuesday, July 14, 2026
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Daniel 4 : Table of Contents

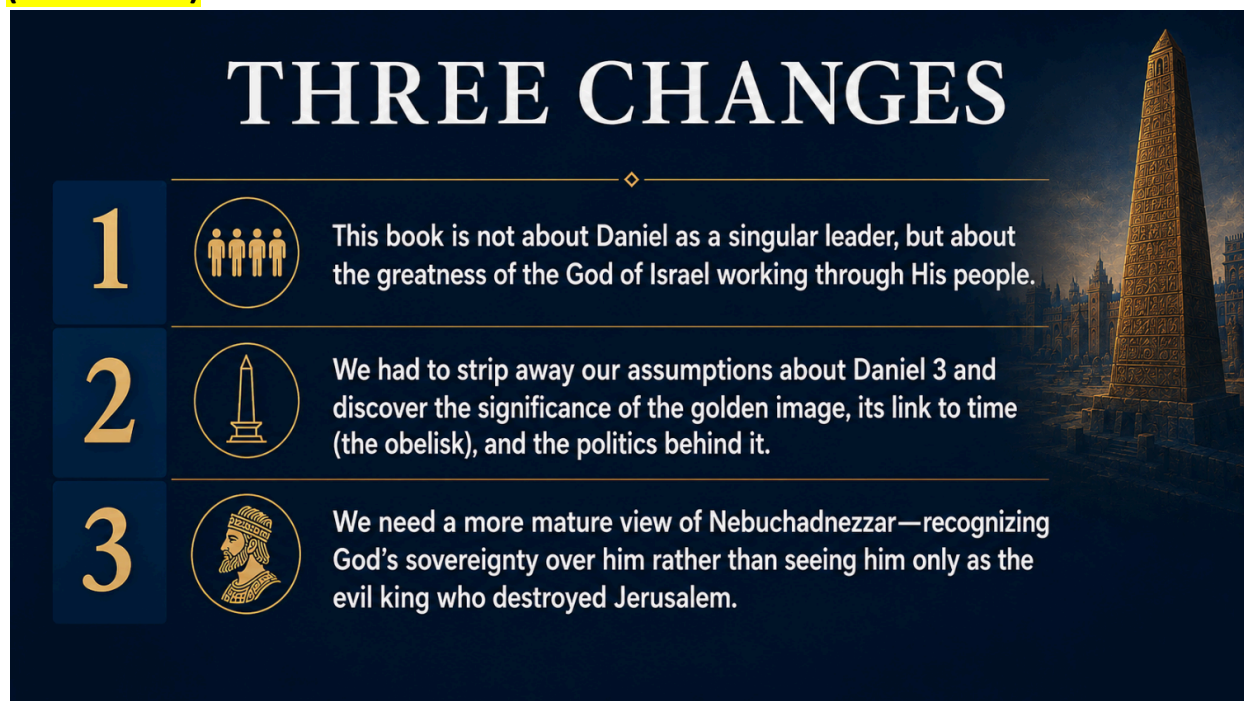
1. Opening Remarks — Rethinking Nebuchadnezzar
2. The Historical Overview: From Sennacherib to Nebuchadnezzar
3. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Authentication of Daniel 4
4. Verses 1–3 — The Testimonial Preface
5. Verses 4–9 — Contented and Prosperous
6. Verses 10–18 — The Tree Vision
7. Verses 19–27 — Daniel Interprets the Dream
8. Verses 28–33 — The Fall and the Seven Years
9. Verses 34–37 — Restoration and Testimony

Opening Remarks — Rethinking Nebuchadnezzar

Tonight promises to be one of the more unique takes on Daniel 4 that you have ever heard. Our team has made several assertions in previous sessions that have continued to prove themselves out as our studies have uncovered more and more historical and archeological evidence. These are truly exciting times because the Lord is breathing fresh revelation and insight into this body.

We have a confession to make. Like many Christians, our tendency has been to view Nebuchadnezzar through the lens of a despotic, tyrannical dictator who is to be vilified in order to enhance the righteous deeds of Daniel. Three things need to change.

(Don't Read)



THREE CHANGES

- 1**  This book is not about Daniel as a singular leader, but about the greatness of the God of Israel working through His people.
- 2**  We had to strip away our assumptions about Daniel 3 and discover the significance of the golden image, its link to time (the obelisk), and the politics behind it.
- 3**  We need a more mature view of Nebuchadnezzar—recognizing God's sovereignty over him rather than seeing him only as the evil king who destroyed Jerusalem.

The first is the view that this book is about Daniel as a singular leader. When we realized that Daniel was only one of a four-person team, it became clear that the book was not about the greatness of Daniel, but rather the greatness of the God of Israel — who is still able to produce exactly what He said He would produce in His people Israel.

The second is that we had to strip away the embedded presumptions most of us had about Daniel 3. We learned about the nature of the golden image and its association with both deities and with time itself — somebody say "obelisk." We

even learned about the political landscape that provoked Nebuchadnezzar to build it in the first place. Tonight you will hear even more surprising historical accounts that lend to this point of view.

The third change is in the way we view Nebuchadnezzar himself. It is clear after weeks of study that we need to develop a more mature view of this man. The typical view — Nebuchadnezzar as the evil Babylonian king who destroyed Jerusalem — is the posture of many commentaries from both Jewish and Christian sources. The thing is, that view robs you of an appreciation for the greatness of God and His sovereignty over all things.

While the first four chapters of Daniel are certainly about Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, they are also about God's dealings with a pagan king. Running alongside the story of our faithful Israelites is the story of God patiently revealing Himself to Nebuchadnezzar.

(DON'T READ)

THE PROGRESSION GOD'S DEALINGS WITH A PAGAN KING		
DANIEL 1		Nebuchadnezzar found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah and wisely brings them into his service. Already, God is positioning His witnesses beside the most powerful ruler on earth.
DANIEL 2		Nebuchadnezzar becomes the recipient of the greatest prophetic dream ever given to a Gentile king. While Daniel interprets it, the revelation itself was given to Nebuchadnezzar because God desired to show him "what will happen in days to come."
DANIEL 3		Nebuchadnezzar alone sees the fourth man walking in the fire. He publicly confesses that no other god can save in this way and exalts the Most High.
DANIEL 4		The story reaches its culmination. Nebuchadnezzar publishes his own testimony to the entire known world. Once again God reveals the future through a dream. The chapter concludes with the king's final recorded public words: "Those who walk in pride he is able to humble."

Notice the progression.

- **Daniel 1:** Nebuchadnezzar found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah and wisely brings them into his service. Already, God is positioning His witnesses beside the most powerful ruler on earth.
- **Daniel 2:** Nebuchadnezzar becomes the recipient of the greatest prophetic dream ever given to a Gentile king. While Daniel interprets it, the revelation itself was given to Nebuchadnezzar because God desired to show him "what will happen in days to come."
- **Daniel 3:** Nebuchadnezzar alone sees the fourth man walking in the fire. He publicly confesses that no other god can save in this way and exalts the Most High.
- **Daniel 4:** The story reaches its culmination. Nebuchadnezzar publishes his own testimony to the entire known world. Once again God reveals the future through a dream. The chapter concludes with the king's final recorded public words:
"Those who walk in pride he is able to humble."

It is difficult to read these four chapters honestly without arriving at an uncomfortable conclusion: God seems far more interested in Nebuchadnezzar than most of us have ever been willing to admit. Before we dismiss him as nothing more than a wicked tyrant, we should first ask how God Himself describes the man.

Consider the way Jeremiah describes the scriptural view of Nebuchadnezzar:

- **Jeremiah 25:8–9 (NIV)** — 8 Therefore the Lord Almighty says this: "Because you have not listened to my words, 9 I will summon all the peoples of the north and **my servant Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon," declares the Lord, "and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin.

There are legions of commentaries from both Jewish and Christian sources that attempt to blunt the impact of the phrase "my servant Nebuchadnezzar," but the fact remains that they are the words God used to describe him. In this passage he is "my servant" who will be brought against Israel and against all surrounding nations.

- **Jeremiah 27:5–7 (NIV)** — 5 With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please. 6 Now I will hand all your countries over to **my servant Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. 7 All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him.

Nebuchadnezzar's rise is clearly portrayed in Scripture as divinely orchestrated. The fact that his role served God's purposes is unassailable. Again, this passage refers to "my servant Nebuchadnezzar," and that phrase should not be taken too lightly.

- **Jeremiah 43:8–13 (ESV)** — 8 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes: 9 "Take in your hands large stones and hide them in the mortar in the pavement that is at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes, **in the sight of the men of Judah**, 10 and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will set his throne above these stones that I have hidden, and he will spread his royal canopy over them. 11 He shall come and strike the land of Egypt, giving over to the pestilence those who are doomed to the pestilence, to captivity those who are doomed to captivity, and to the sword those who are doomed to the sword. 12 I shall kindle a fire in the temples of the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them and carry them away captive. And he shall clean the land of Egypt as a shepherd cleans his cloak of vermin, and he shall go away from there in peace. 13 **He shall break the obelisks of Heliopolis**, which is in the land of Egypt, and the temples of the gods of Egypt he shall burn with fire.' "

In this passage Nebuchadnezzar is again "my servant," and his dominion over Egypt is proclaimed by God and co-witnessed by Jeremiah and the Jewish people. He is being used as the instrument of the Lord — both to chasten Jews who fled to Egypt for refuge and to break the Egyptian gods represented by the obelisks of Heliopolis. How interesting that Nebuchadnezzar's interactions with obelisks would be written into the Bible. Notice the words: "I will set his throne over these

stones." The Scripture directly declares in all three of these instances that the Lord is using Nebuchadnezzar as "my servant."

Even in the best of families, it is not uncommon for children to describe the discipline they received at the hands of an authority as unfair, evil, or excessive. Perhaps this innate human tendency has affected the way readers have viewed Nebuchadnezzar through the centuries — but the Scripture declares that he was "my servant."

The typical workaround is to say that God used him the way a master uses a slave. This view has some merit, but it denies God's description of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. Before we get to that, consider what Jesus said:

- **John 15:15 (NIV)** — 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father **I have made known to you.**

We are not suggesting that Nebuchadnezzar started off in right relationship to God. We are suggesting that the beginnings of a relationship are illustrated in the following texts, and that God wanted to make known to Nebuchadnezzar things that indicate the beginnings of a friendship.

(Don't Read)

Daniel 2:28 (NIV)

28 but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

Daniel 2:29 (NIV)

29 “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

Daniel 2:37–38 (NIV)

37 You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; 38 in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.



- o **Daniel 2:28 (NIV)** — 28 but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

It is Nebuchadnezzar who received the spiritual dream, and it was Nebuchadnezzar that God was showing the future. The fact that Daniel, Mishael, Azariah, and Hananiah were used as interpreters does not diminish the fact that God was speaking to Nebuchadnezzar and showing him what would come. In other words, God was revealing things to Nebuchadnezzar that go beyond the servant relationship and begin to point to a developing friendship.

- o **Daniel 2:29 (NIV)** — 29 “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed **you** what is going to happen.

Although Nebuchadnezzar did not have the spiritual basis to interpret what God was showing him, it is clear that the dream itself was in response to Nebuchadnezzar's mind contemplating "things to come." This is a fact entirely overlooked by interpreters. Nebuchadnezzar was in some way seeking revelation

— and God wanted him to have it. When considering this in light of John 15, this is a strong indication that a relationship or friendship was in the developing stages.

- o **Daniel 2:37–38 (NIV)** — 37 You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; 38 in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

Tonight you will discover that the chronology of events means that the phrase "The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory" is a prediction — it was not yet an earthly reality when the words were spoken. Some measure of faith in this prophecy was required on Nebuchadnezzar's part. In light of John 15, it seems appropriate to see these passages as the development of a friendship between God and Nebuchadnezzar — after all, mere servants are not aware of their master's business. Friends are.

In all of our negative views of Nebuchadnezzar, how was it possible to miss that God said, "You are that head of gold"? This is clearly a positive statement, standing above the descriptors of all the other kingdoms. In God's eyes, Nebuchadnezzar was of more intrinsic value than the inferiors that would come after him. God called Nebuchadnezzar — the man, the king — a head of gold.

Tonight, you will see Nebuchadnezzar humanized. His struggles, challenges, victories, and ultimately his testimony will become far more impactful to you than ever before.

By now, some of you may be thinking, That's all very interesting... but what about everything Nebuchadnezzar did?

That's a fair question. Nebuchadnezzar's sins were real, and the Scriptures do not attempt to hide them.

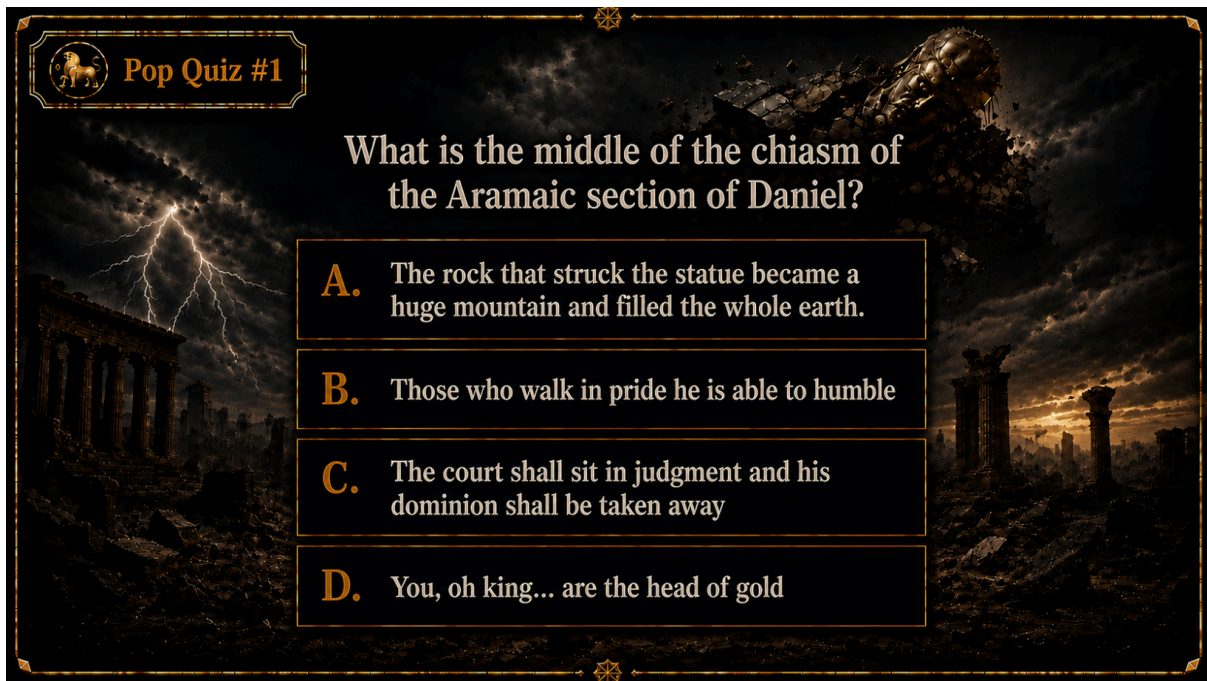
But before we address that question, allow us to suggest something that may be even more uncomfortable:

You are Nebuchadnezzar.

No, you have not conquered nations. But you have wrestled with pride. You have resisted the Lord's correction. You have taken steps toward Him only to stumble backward again. Like Nebuchadnezzar, your story is one of progress mixed with failure.

Throughout these first four chapters, Nebuchadnezzar repeatedly takes two steps forward, followed by one painful step backward. Yet God continues speaking to him, revealing Himself to him, correcting him, and patiently drawing him to the place where he can finally say, "Those who walk in pride He is able to humble."

If that sounds familiar, it should. That is the testimony of nearly every believer in this room.

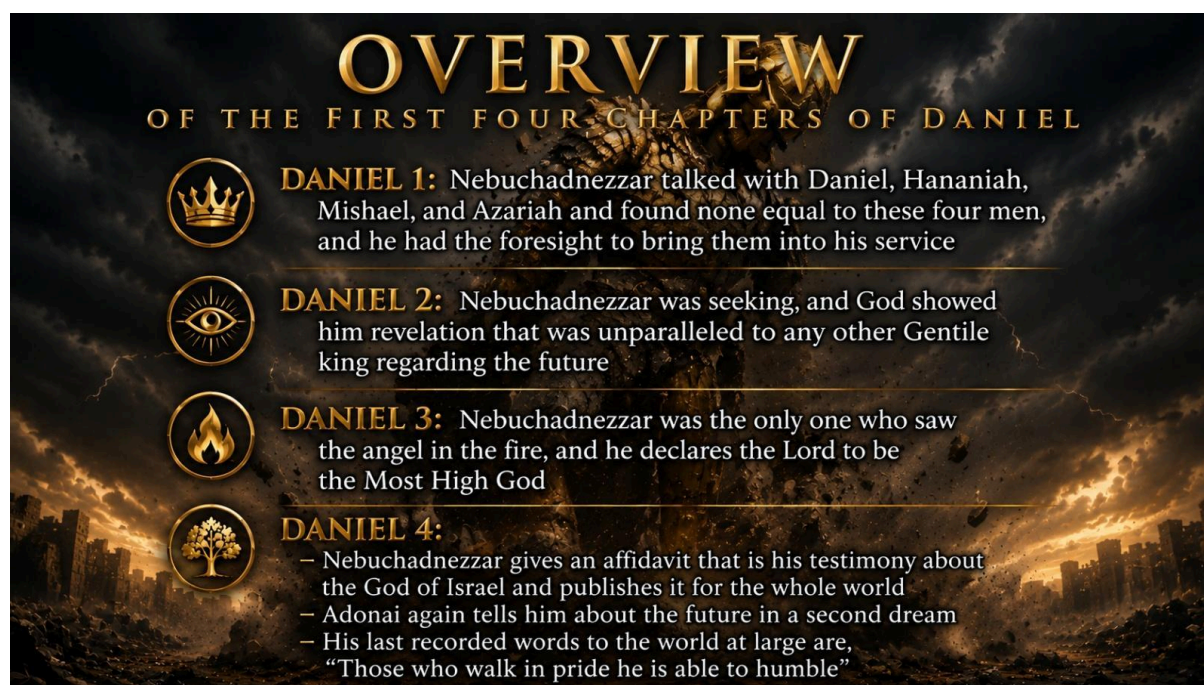


Pop Quiz #1

What is the middle of the chiasm of the Aramaic section of Daniel?

- A.** The rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.
- B.** Those who walk in pride he is able to humble
- C.** The court shall sit in judgment and his dominion shall be taken away
- D.** You, oh king... are the head of gold

Tonight, you will see Nebuchadnezzar humanized! His struggles, challenges, victories, and ultimately his testimony will become far more impactful to you than ever before. In this effort, let us begin with the broad overview from Daniel 1 to Daniel 4 and then we will move to the historical accounts:



- Daniel 1: Nebuchadnezzar talked with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah and found none equal to these four men, and he had the foresight to bring them into his service
- Daniel 2: Nebuchadnezzar was seeking, and God showed him revelation that was unparalleled to any other Gentile king regarding the future
- Daniel 3: Nebuchadnezzar was the only one who saw the angel in the fire, and he declares the Lord to be the Most High God
- Daniel 4:
 - Nebuchadnezzar gives an affidavit that is his testimony about the God of Israel and publishes it for the whole world
 - Adonai again tells him about the future in a second dream
 - His last recorded words to the world at large are, “Those who walk in pride he is able to humble”

We clearly have a lot to say about this subject and we also know that questions are formulating in your minds as we speak, so let's move on to some of the historical accounts that may aid in understanding this remarkable man.

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2. The Historical Overview: From Sennacherib to Nebuchadnezzar

The book of Exodus contains the brutal oppression of the Jewish people by the Egyptian empire and details their supernatural deliverance. Did you know that Adonai used Nebuchadnezzar centuries later to humble Egypt?

The next major oppressor of Israel was the Kingdom of Assyria. This empire ravaged Northern Israel and continually threatened Southern Israel. Did you know that Adonai used Nabopolassar (Nebuchadnezzar's father) to humble Assyria a little over 100 years later?

Most tend to think of Nebuchadnezzar's family as solely oppressors but they were also instruments in the hand of God for retribution on those nations that oppressed Israel... namely Egypt and Assyria.

Our historical overview begins with events in Assyria and an infamous king named Sennacherib. Then we will proceed in time to the Neo-Babylonian king Nabopolassar and then eventually Nebuchadnezzar. We want to describe the rise of the Neo-Babylonian Empire for you tonight so that you can understand Nebuchadnezzar's challenges and appreciate his testimony:

This slide is about the Assyrian king Sennacherib. He is the same man that attacked Jerusalem in Hezekiah's day as Isaiah 36-37 and 2 Kings 18-19 describe:

SENNACHERIB

The Assyrian kings during this period were of Aramaean descent, and while Akkadian was still spoken in Assyria and Babylonia, the Aramaic language had become the international language of trade, commerce and foreign relations.

For many years, Assyria had been content with simply annexing Babylon and appointing a puppet king there who would be loyal to Assyria, but during Sennacherib's reign, one of these puppets, Mardukapla-iddina II, rebelled against Assyria and seized the throne of Babylon.

Over a period lasting 15 years or so Sennacherib struggled desperately to maintain control of Babylon, and in 689 B.C. he laid siege to Babylon.

When the city finally surrendered after being cut off for 15 months, Sennacherib carried off the wealth of the city and destroyed every major structure the Assyrians could find, from government palaces and religious temples to residential buildings.

SOURCE: *LEGENDS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD: THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR II*

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Babylon had been an impressive power in the times of Hammurabi (which was roughly around the time of Moses 1,000 years earlier) However in the time of Sennacherib, Babylon had been reduced to a vassal of Assyria and suffered incredibly under their domination.

Additionally, the Assyrian empire influenced the region linguistically, in that, Aramaic became the international language of trade. This, in part, is an explanation for why the chapters we are studying in Daniel are written in Aramaic and the letter that Nebuchadnezzar sent out to the world in Chapter 4 is in Aramaic.

SENNACHERIB, ESARHADDON, AND NABOPOLASSAR

Nevertheless, Babylon remained important both culturally and strategically to the Assyrians, so Esarhaddon, Sennacherib's son, began rebuilding Babylon in the very first year of his reign, 681 B.C. He even returned and restored the statues of the Babylonian gods that had been carried off or destroyed by his father.

That generosity was repaid about 50 years later, in 626 B.C., when one of the Assyrian officials in Babylon, Nabopolassar, led a revolt against the Assyrians. Nabopolassar was a member of one of the tribes of Kaldu, and he won out over Aššuretil-ilani, the Assyrian king, who had proclaimed himself the ruler of Babylon only a year before. Nabopolassar identified with the people and in his inscriptions claimed for himself the title "son of a nobody."

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Nabopolassar occupies a place in Babylonian history much like George Washington does in American history. He was the founder of what historians call the Neo-Babylonian Kingdom. In 626 B.C., during the reign of Josiah king of Judah and near the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry, Nabopolassar successfully revolted against Assyria and began leading Babylon out from under Assyrian domination.

He then rebuilt Babylon from the ruins left by Sennacherib. Although Sennacherib's son Esarhaddon had restored several temples in an effort to gain the favor of the Babylonian people, he intentionally left the city militarily vulnerable and in disrepair. Nabopolassar changed that. Though he had no noble

lineage and called himself the “son of nobody,” he rose from obscurity, stood against the Assyrians, and restored Babylon to power and dignity.

Nabopolassar belonged to the tribe of Kaldu, which may help explain why the Babylonians of this period came to be called Chaldeans. When you think of Nabopolassar, therefore, do not think of him merely as Nebuchadnezzar’s father. Think of him as the man who freed his people from foreign oppression, rebuilt their shattered capital, restored the glory of Babylon, and gave a demoralized people renewed pride in their national identity.

It may seem strange to you that we are giving you the back ground on Nabopolassar but it really shouldn't be! The entire book of Nahum is dedicated to the punishment of Assyria and the instrument that God used to accomplish this was Nabopolassar (the father of Nebuchadnezzar)

NABOPOLASSAR AND NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Nabopolassar’s first son, Nebuchadnezzar, was probably a fairly young child when his father took the throne, and the boy grew up in the palace watching him build what would become the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Nebuchadnezzar also grew up alongside at least two brothers that we know about: Nabu-šuma-lišir, was the second born son and probably closest to Nebuchadnezzar, while Nabu-zer-ušabši was a much younger brother (or possibly step-brother) of Nebuchadnezzar and may not have played much of a role in Nebuchadnezzar’s formative years. To make sure that there was no question about which of his sons should inherit the throne, before he was a young man Nabopolassar declared Nebuchadnezzar “the chief son, the crown prince” in 607 B.C. Nabopolassar named his first-born son, Nabû-kudurri-ušur, which is an Akkadian phrase meaning “Nabu, protect my lineage”

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Nebuchadnezzar was a young child during the earlier nation building years of his father's monarchy. They were undoubtedly very close. Given what Nebuchadnezzar would go on to do, you may think of Nabopolassar a little like David and Nebuchadnezzar a little like Solomon. Clearly these men were not as enlightened as their Jewish counterparts but nationally speaking they did the same kind of things for their nation and people.

You have also learned that Nebuchadnezzar had two brothers and the one closest to him is particularly important because between the events of Daniel 2 and Daniel 3, in what was Nebuchadnezzar's 3rd year, this brother rebelled against his rule. These events are recorded in the Babylonian Chronicles that we provided you a translation of last week.

The cuneiform tablets don't provide us with the brother's motivation but it is not hard to imagine that he was jealous of Nebuchadnezzar being favored by their father (much in the same way that the story of Joseph and his brothers initiated). This jealousy may have reached its pinnacle after Nebuchadnezzar received word from both Daniel and Adonai that he was the "head of gold"! Just like the story of Joseph and the "coat of many colors"

Notice that the Akkadian version of Nebuchadnezzar is "Nabu-kudurri-usur" which is translated as "Nabu, protect my lineage". The next slide will help us understand how that name becomes Nebuchadnezzar

(read only the underline or bolded points of this slide)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

In Hebrew, this name became Nebuchadrezzar, similar to the Greek transliteration found in the work of Greek historian Strabo, Nabukodrosor (Ναβουκοδρσορ). At the same time, in the Hebrew Bible, half the time the name is written Nebuchadrezzar, but the other half of the time the name is written Nebuchadnezzar. The Septuagint Greek translation of the Bible and other writers dependent on the Bible, like Josephus, used this latter form of the name, Naboukodonosor (Ναβουκοδονοσορ). This change of the /r/ > /n/ is not limited to the Hebrew Bible but can even be seen in some of the royal documents from Babylonia itself. There is an Aramaic tablet, dated to the 34th year of the king, where the name is written, nbwkdñr. ⁷ This is not a standard sound change in Hebrew or Aramaic, so it is still unclear why the change occurred in the first place. **The important thing to note is that both in Babylonia itself and in the Hebrew Bible, there are two forms of the king's name, Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuchadrezzar.**

LEGENDS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD: THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR II

The point in this slide is not to bog down in Hebrew and Aramaic transliteration but to acknowledge that the name that meant "Nabu, protect my lineage" is expressed in multiple forms both in the Bible and in the official Babylonian texts. The acknowledgement of this fact may add additional insight towards the end of our study as we get into the "Prayer of Nabonidus" and the Dead Sea Scrolls account of a "Jewish Exorcist"---For now write into your notes that Nebuchadnezzar's name occurs in multiple forms in the Bible and in historical Babylonian records... Let's return to Nabopolassar. Remember that Nabopolassar starts as "the son of nobody" and that Nebuchadnezzar inherited the kingdom that his father left him. When Nabopolassar began, he had to gain the loyalty of the men around him. The historians working for Charles River Editors put it like this:

NABOPOLASSAR'S LAND GRANTS

Nabopolassar also rewarded the loyalty of his subjects by occasionally granting land rights to key members in society, like a man named Nabu-ahhe-bullit, to whom he granted land near Borsippa. In Mesopotamian culture, these land rights were extremely important, as there were laws requiring that the land remain in the same family and could not be sold outside the family.

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These land grants to key members of society were given to the same groupings mentioned in Daniel 3:

Read slide

KEY MEMBERS OF SOCIETY GIVEN LAND GRANTS

- ✦ Satraps
- ✦ Prefects
- ✦ Governors
- ✦ Advisers
- ✦ Treasurers
- ✦ Judges
- ✦ Magistrates
- ✦ Other provincial officials

This turns out to present serious problems in the time of Nabopolassar's son Nebuchadnezzar and provides a facet of the background for Daniel 3:

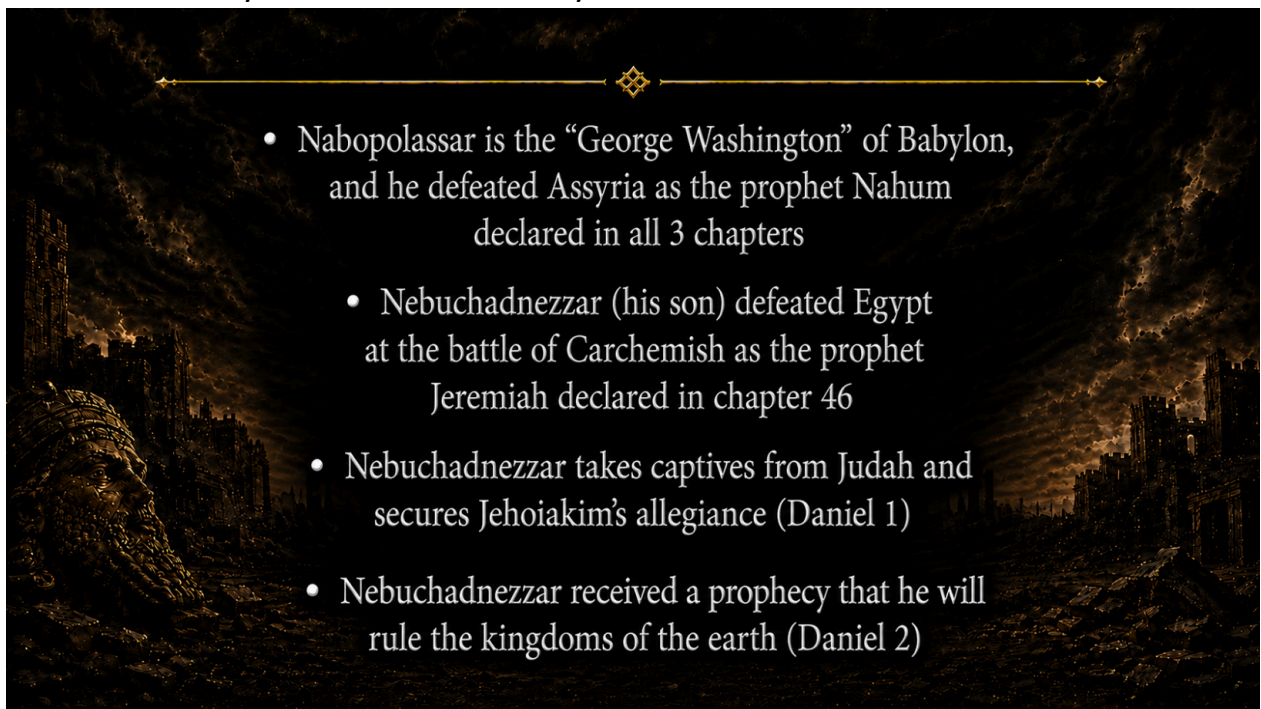
LAND GRANTS THAT BECAME NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PROBLEM

Similarly, Nebuchadnezzar's 10th year on the throne was met by a rebellion of the leading officials within Babylon itself, but it took Nebuchadnezzar only a month to quell the rebellion and capture its leader personally. Archaeologists discovered the records of the trial and sentencing of one of the officials involved in this rebellion named Babuaha-iddina, the son of Nabu-ahhe-bullit, to whom his father had bequeathed land rights. Babu-aha-iddina was charged with treason for breaking his official oath of loyalty to the crown and was convicted by the courts and sentenced to death for his crimes.

Land Grants that became Nebuchadnezzar's Problem

Similarly, Nebuchadnezzar's 10th year on the throne was met by a rebellion of the leading officials within Babylon itself, but it took Nebuchadnezzar only a month to quell the rebellion and capture its leader personally. Archaeologists discovered the records of the trial and sentencing of one of the officials involved in this rebellion named Babuaha-iddina, the son of Nabu-ahhe-bullit, to whom his father had bequeathed land rights. Babu-aha-iddina was charged with treason for breaking his official oath of loyalty to the crown and was convicted by the courts and sentenced to death for his crimes.

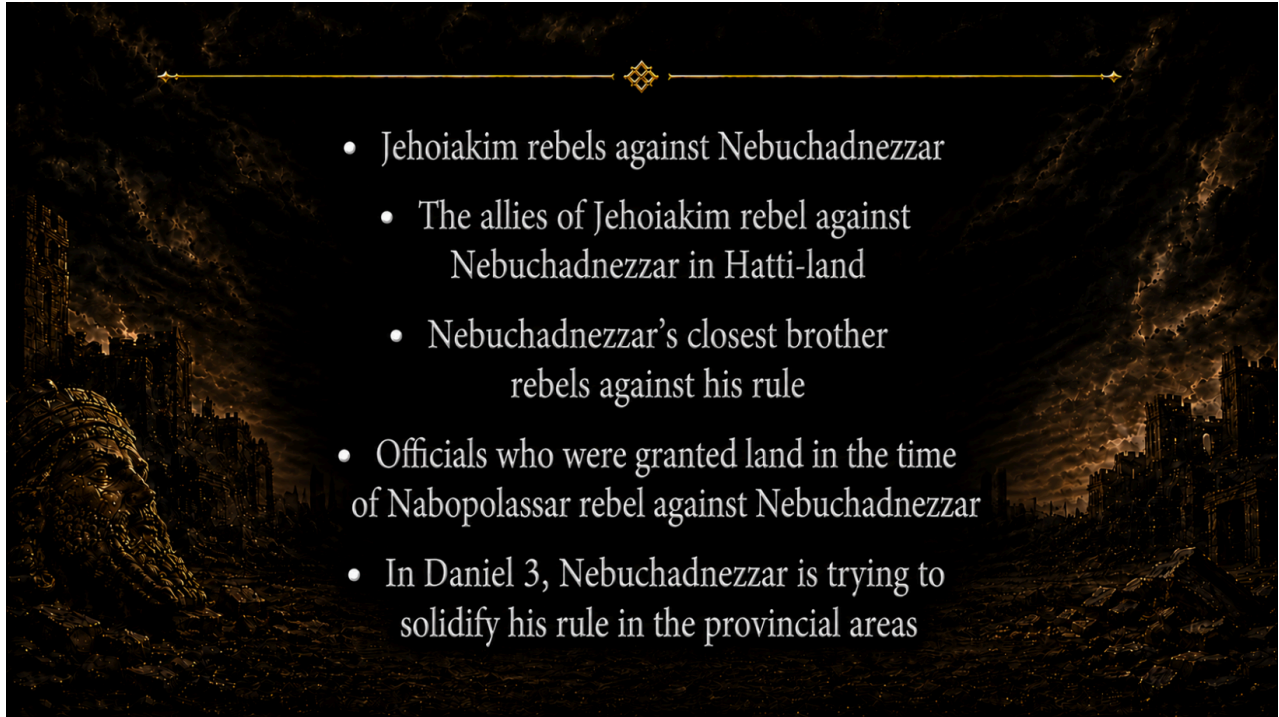
Since these names and dates are probably overwhelming you, let us help you distill some of the information from our previous sessions as well as this new information for you in a brief summary:



Brief Summary

- Nabopolassar is the “George Washington” of Babylon, and he defeated Assyria as the prophet Nahum declared in all 3 chapters
- Nebuchadnezzar (his son) defeated Egypt at the battle of Carchemish as the prophet Jeremiah declared in chapter 46
- Nebuchadnezzar takes captives from Judah and secures Jehoiakim's allegiance (Daniel 1)
- Nebuchadnezzar received a prophecy that he will rule the kingdoms of the earth (Daniel 2)

Events between Daniel 2 and 3



- Jehoiakim rebels against Nebuchadnezzar
- The allies of Jehoiakim rebel against Nebuchadnezzar in Hatti-land
- Nebuchadnezzar's closest brother rebels against his rule
- Officials who were granted land in the time of Nabopolassar rebel against Nebuchadnezzar
- In Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar is trying to solidify his rule in the provincial areas

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 - Officials who were granted land in the time of Nabopolassar rebel against Nebuchadnezzar
 - In Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar is trying to solidify his rule in the provincial areas
- These are only a few of the difficulties in the political backdrop of Daniel 1-3 and yet Nebuchadnezzar must be seen in light of these things summarized on this slide:

BRIEF BIBLICAL SUMMARY

- **Daniel 1:** Nebuchadnezzar talked with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah and found none equal to these four men, and he had the foresight to bring them into his service
- **Daniel 2:** Nebuchadnezzar was seeking, and God showed him revelation that was unparalleled to any other Gentile king regarding the future
- **Daniel 3:** Nebuchadnezzar was the only one who saw the angel in the fire, and he declares the Lord to be the Most High God

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Tonight, you will read Daniel 4 and see that:

- Nebuchadnezzar gives an affidavit that is his testimony about the God of Israel and publishes it for the whole world
- Adonai again tells him about the future in a second dream
- His last recorded words to the world at large are, "Those who walk in pride he is able to humble"

These events are incredible in their own right and demonstrate a growing relationship between Adonai and Nebuchadnezzar... maybe even a friendship! They become even more impressive when you consider the probable age of Nebuchadnezzar at each event:

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S AGE

Dates are difficult to authenticate for his birth, but Encyclopedia Britannica says Nebuchadnezzar was born in 630 B.C.

- Nebuchadnezzar joined his father on the battlefield in Harran, Assyria at only 20 years old. His father left the battle in his hands to return to Babylon and settle political unrest in 610 B.C. (Eph'al, Israel. "Nebuchadnezzar, the Warrior: Remarks on his Military Achievements." *Israel Exploration Journal* 53 (2003) 178-91. (179))
- Nebuchadnezzar was only 25 when he proved himself a master strategist in the victory over Egypt at Carchemish in 605 B.C
- Nabopolassar died the same year and Nebuchadnezzar began his ascension year. This is Daniel 1
- Nebuchadnezzar is 27 or 28 in Daniel 2 as he is prophesied to rule the world
- Nebuchadnezzar is 32 or 33 when Jehoiakim rebels and the second siege of Jerusalem occurs
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It is easy to read the negative events of Nebuchadnezzar's life and vilify him...

Much in the same way that we could recount any of your failures and paint a very negative picture of you. But the scriptural and historical records actually display an impressive man that was full of flaws and yet growing in his understanding of God's will. He was used mightily for Adonai's purposes and Adonai revealed more to him than any Gentile King in history.

Did you remember that Nebuchadnezzar was married... and apparently a pretty good husband?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Married in 614 B.C. (16 Years Old)

Nabopolassar made a treaty with the Medes and obtained the Median princess, Amytis, as a wife for his first-born son, Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar was well known among ancient historians and contemporary writers because of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the ancient wonders of the world. According to ancient accounts, Nebuchadnezzar constructed the Hanging Gardens for his homesick wife.

They were created...after the model of Egyptian pleasure gardens. Many ancient writers discussed the Hanging Gardens, including Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, and Quintus Curtius Rufus. Moreover, Diodorus Siculus and Philo of Byzantium both described the mechanisms of the Gardens at length. According to their accounts, the Hanging Gardens were terraced and cultivated orchards that were built over a series of buildings made of glazed ceramic and perhaps watered by some kind of pulley or pump system of irrigation. Water was drawn from a reservoir through a network of reeds and bricks, held together by asphalt and cement, with lead used as a sealant. The Gardens were built on a citadel 80 feet high with walls 22 feet thick.

SOURCE: LEGENDS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD: THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR II

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What year was Nebuchadnezzar born?

A. 410

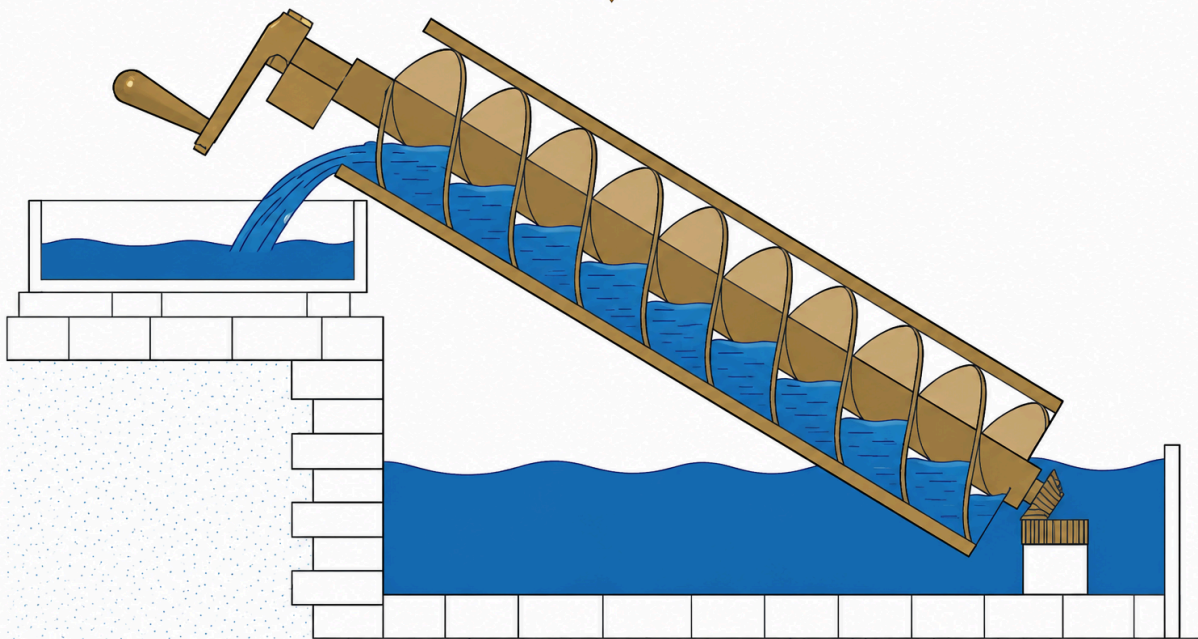
B. 630

C. 545

D. 605

E. 680

ARCHIMEDES SCREW

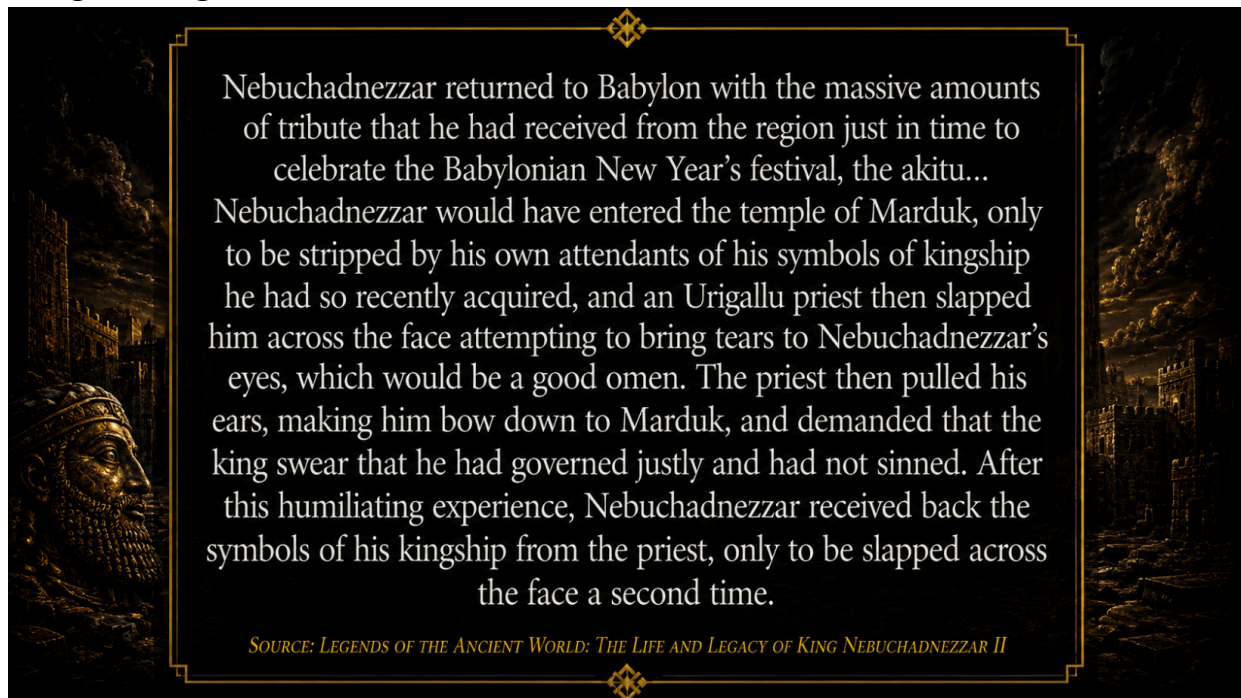


According to the publisher of the cited work MIT and Harvard contributors estimated that it took 8,000 gallons of water per day to irrigate these gardens.

Additionally, some of the writings describe an instrument like the "Archimedes Screw" that may have been used to irrigate the garden. The only reason this issue is in dispute is that it would mean the Nebuchadnezzar invented the mechanism before Archimedes who is generally credited with it.

Not only was Nebuchadnezzar a dedicated husband but he was a loyal son.

It was while Nebuchadnezzar was cleaning up the situation in the west with Egypt that the sad news of his father's death reached him. Upon hearing the news, he made arrangements for his army, along with all of their booty and captives, to return to Babylon on their own, likely under the command of one of his trusted military commanders, while he made great haste for Babylon with only a few of his closest companions. He made it to Babylon in record time by covering nearly 600 miles in 12-15 days [He then left immediately to collect tribute in Hatti-land and gain allegiances]



Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon with the massive amounts of tribute that he had received from the region just in time to celebrate the Babylonian New Year's festival, the akītu...Nebuchadnezzar would have entered the temple of Marduk, only to be stripped by his own attendants of his symbols of kingship he had so recently acquired, and an Urigallu priest then slapped him across the face attempting to bring tears to Nebuchadnezzar's eyes, which would be a good omen. The priest then pulled his ears, making him bow down to Marduk, and demanded that the king swear that he had governed justly and had not sinned.

After this humiliating experience, Nebuchadnezzar received back the symbols of his kingship from the priest, only to be slapped across the face a second time.

Legends of the Ancient World: The Life and Legacy of King Nebuchadnezzar II

When you are hearing these kinds of historical accounts it is easy to read them dispassionately. Imagine that you stood at your father's side as he single handedly defeated Assyria and then proceeded to rebuild the nation that you live in. Imagine that you accompanied him in battle against the world's foremost super powers like Egypt. Imagine that he then entrusted you with finishing those battles. Keep in mind that you are his favorite and he has named you the "crown prince". Then you get the news that your father is dead! How would you feel?

Then you are 600 miles away at the time of his death... so you travel 40 to 50 miles a day on horseback to return home, only to have to leave immediately to sure up the kingdom that you are now responsible for.... Remember, you are only 25 years old

Finally, you arrive back at home and the realization has set in on you that you are the ascended king. You are probably very concerned that you may not be able to fill your father's shoes.... Then the first ceremony that you undergo is the Priests of Babylon slapping you, pulling your ears, and trying to make you cry and bow to Marduk.

Can you even imagine what that must have been like... No wonder Nebuchadnezzar had a healthy distrust for the "wisemen of Babylon". No wonder, given all the rebellion in the ranks of the "wisemen" and the betrayal of his closest brother and the betrayal of Jehoiakim... No wonder, he acted the way that he did in Daniel 3?

The other thing that is crazy is that these are only a few of the rebellions that Nebuchadnezzar had to deal with... Consider this:

CONSTANT TROUBLE IN HATTI-LAND

Not all of the kings in the region who shared Jehoiakim's political beliefs agreed that they needed to wait for a more opportune time to defy Nebuchadnezzar, because the king of Ashkelon, one of the five prominent Philistine cities along the coast, flatly refused to pay tribute. [Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city]

Unfortunately, one of the cities, possibly another Philistine city called Ekron, did not get the message, and their king refused to pay further tribute to Nebuchadnezzar. Once again, Nebuchadnezzar summoned his army, and this time the sources indicate it was a "large" one. Nebuchadnezzar marched to the troubled region of Hatti, and when they reached Aphek, King Adon of the city.. wrote a letter in Aramaic to the Pharaoh asking for help in the way of troop reinforcements by appealing to a treaty between Egypt and the town. [Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city]

Less than a year after Nebuchadnezzar had handpicked him for the Judean throne, in 597 B.C. Zedekiah held an anti-Babylonian summit in Jerusalem to discuss possible battle plans and strategy for overthrowing the Babylonian oppressors. He gathered representatives from Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon and Edom (Jer. 37:1-12), and it is apparent that the animosity towards Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar in Jerusalem overwhelmed Zedekiah's gratitude to the king for placing him on the Judean throne.

In response to Zedekiah's defiance, Nebuchadnezzar brought the force of his entire Babylonian army against the city of Jerusalem in 588 BC. They began by building a circumvallation wall around the city.

SOURCE: LEGENDS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD: THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR II

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After the events of Daniel 3, the constant rebellions in Hatti-land seems to have provoked a change in policy from Nebuchadnezzar. He had previously tried to leave autonomous vassal states in the region but every time he did that they rebelled. As you can see from the slide this was often provoked by Philistines living within the territories of Israel.

Additionally, each time Nebuchadnezzar installs a King on the throne of Judah, that king breaks his word and rebels against Babylon. The prophet Jeremiah had proclaimed that Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant and that Israel should submit to him but Judah would not listen! Daniel 2 gave Nebuchadnezzar direct revelation that he was supposed to subdue the regions but they were in constant rebellion to his God-ordained rule...So Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in 588 and destroyed the city after a 2 year siege!

We are going to pick up in Daniel 4 shortly, but it is our opinion that the chapter is occurring in the years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign following the 3rd siege of Jerusalem! Before we get there let's consider the extent of Nebuchadnezzar's rule:



- **2 Kings 24:7 (NIV)**

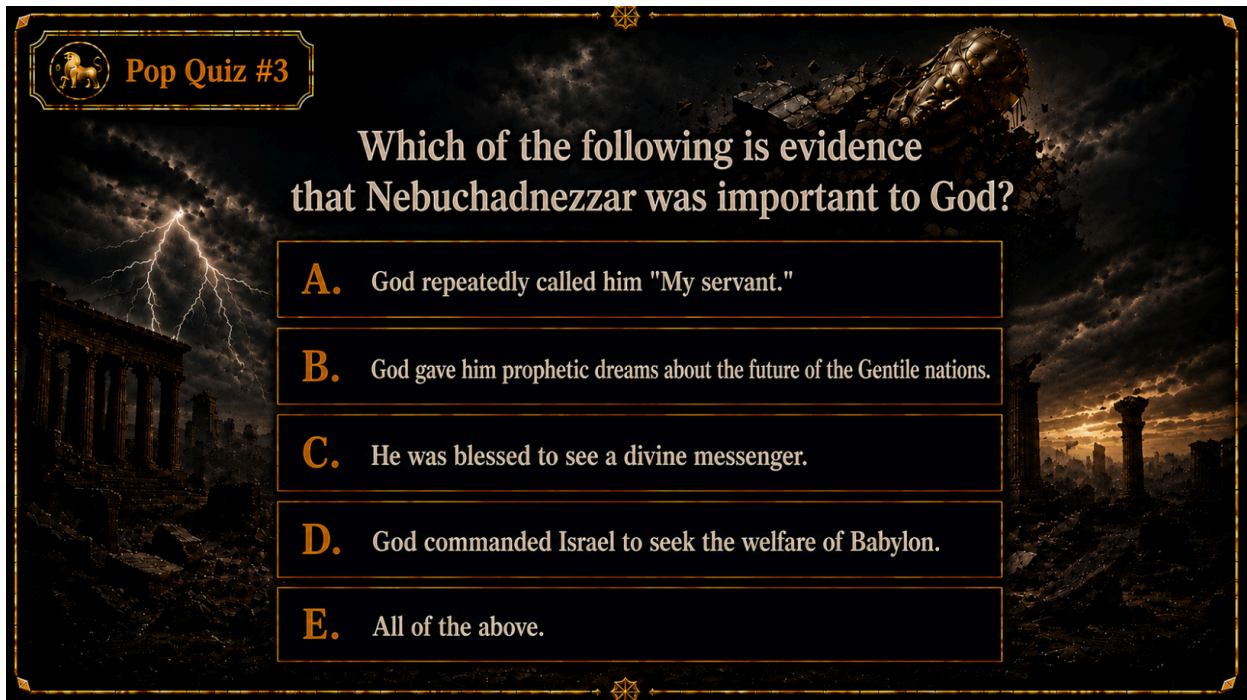
7 The king of Egypt did not march out from his own country again, because the king of Babylon had taken all his territory, from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates River.

Nebuchadnezzar reigned in Babylon 43 years! His empire was extensive and ruled the Biblical World. His demonstrable track record in the Scripture illustrates: The recognition of the uniqueness of Daniel, Hannaniah, Mishael, and Azariah (Daniel 1)

The kind of heart that sought to understand the future and that God spoke to him through dreams (Daniel 2)

Repentance, in that, he prostrated himself and acknowledge the Most High God (Daniel 3)

As we come to Daniel 4, we are reading about the culmination of Nebuchadnezzar's life and we believe that it had as much impact on the Kingdom of God as anyone we know living today!



Pop Quiz #3

Which of the following is evidence that Nebuchadnezzar was important to God?

- A.** God repeatedly called him "My servant."
- B.** God gave him prophetic dreams about the future of the Gentile nations.
- C.** He was blessed to see a divine messenger.
- D.** God commanded Israel to seek the welfare of Babylon.
- E.** All of the above.

Daniel 4 : Table of Contents

1. Opening Remarks — Rethinking Nebuchadnezzar
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3. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Authentication of Daniel 4
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The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Authentication of Daniel 4

Do you remember that we told you Nebuchadnezzar's name appeared in two forms in the Bible and in multiple forms in Babylonian records? There is a reason we told you that. There are multiple historical document's that confirm a story similar to the one in our chapter tonight, but the name of the king is slightly different. Consider this prayer that was found as a part of the Dead Sea Scrolls:

(Do Not Read)

Qumran Cave 4, “Prayer of Nabonidus”

The words of the p[ra]yer which Nabonidus, king of [Ba]bylon, the great king; pray[ed] when he was stricken

2. with an evil disease by the decree of G[o]d in Teman. [I Nabonidus] was stricken with [an evil disease]
3. for seven years, and from [that] (time) I was like [unto a beast and I prayed to the Most High]
4. and, as for my sin, he forgave it (or: my sin he forgave). A diviner—who was a Jew o[f the Exiles—came to me and said:]
5. ‘Recount and record (these things) in order to give honour and great[ness] to the name of the G[od Most High.’ And Thus I wrote: [
6. was stricken with an evil disease in Teman [by the decree of the Most High God, and, as for me.]
7. seven years I was praying [to] gods of silver and gold, [bronze, iron,]
8. wood, stone (and) clay, because [I was of the opinijon that th[ey] were gods.



Enrique Baez, “Nabonidus, Prayer of,” in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

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Scholars have often assumed that Daniel 4 is wrong because this document has such remarkable similarities with the events of Daniel 4 but seems to name a different king. However, Nebuchadnezzar's name appears in multiple forms in

both the Bible and in Babylonian texts. This is expounded by the fact that semitic languages often do not include vowels, leaving a level of interpretive liberty to the pronunciation of names. Even if this document refers to another king, it would be far more reasonable to assume that the Bible is right and that archeology is still catching up to the truth of God's word.

The very existence of this document is remarkable - mentioning a king who suffered from an ailment for 7 years and was likened unto a beast until a Jewish exile cured him! Truly God's word is constantly being made more certain as Peter explains.

- o **2 Peter 1:19 (ESV)**

19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,

Pray: Read Chapter:

**Daniel 4:1–3 — The Testimonial Preface -
4 King Nebuchadnezzar,**

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

May you prosper greatly!

² It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.

**³ How great are his signs,
how mighty his wonders!
His kingdom is an eternal kingdom;
his dominion endures from generation to generation.**

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We want you to notice that the man writing this letter has already experienced the events contained within it and preceding it. That means Nebuchadnezzar as the author has experienced:

(Do Not Read)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

- **Daniel 1:18-21** Examined the 4 Hebrews and found none better... this was a witness to Nebuchadnezzar
- **Daniel 2:27-45** Received a dream from God and the prophecy that he would rule the nations... He responded by making the 4 Hebrews members of his government. The witness is growing
- **Daniel 3:24-30** He saw an angel. He saw supernatural deliverance. He responded by issuing a protective decree, praises them, promotes them again, and praises their God. The witness growing
- **Daniel 4:10-34** He has had another dream showing him the future. He saw another angel/watcher. The watcher speaks to him in the dream. Nebuchadnezzar is spoken to directly from Heaven. Nebuchadnezzar is humbled. Nebuchadnezzar is healed.

The witness has now taken root! His response is to issue a world-wide testimonial about the greatness of the Most High God. This was the greatest feat of evangelism up to this point in history!

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- In Daniel 3:24–30 — he saw supernatural deliverance, an angel in the fire. He responded by issuing a protective decree, promoting the three Hebrews, and praising their God. The witness growing even further.
- In Daniel 4 — he has another dream showing him the future, sees another watcher, is spoken to directly from heaven, he is humbled and he is healed.

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What was Nebuchadnezzar's response to this witness taking root in him? A worldwide testimonial proclaiming the greatness of the Most High God—quite possibly the greatest act of evangelism the world had yet seen. Imagine what it took for Nebuchadnezzar to write this proclamation. The most powerful king on earth wasn't boasting of his victories or expanding his legacy. He was telling the entire known world how God brought him low, exposed his pride, and then graciously restored him. His greatest proclamation was not about his own greatness, but about God's. It reminds us of James' instruction:

- **James 1:9–10 (ESV)**

9 Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, 10 and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.

We wish everyone who came to know the LORD would have this same zeal to unashamedly tell of God's supernatural power in their lives.

We want to draw your attention to another facet of this verse.

- **Daniel 4:1 (ESV)**

4 King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: **Peace** be multiplied to you!

This is the Aramaic equivalent of Shalom be multiplied, increase, or abound in you. It is clear that Nebuchadnezzar has experienced right order with God and Man. He has a new found whole-ness and harmony with God. Even more, the intended outcome of his letter is that all peoples, nations, and men of every language, who live in all the world would have this kind of Shalom multiplying, increasing, and abounding in them!

This is the product of a genuine experience with God that Nebuchadnezzar now desires for all men. Perhaps it will remind you of the writings of Paul:

- o **1 Timothy 2:1–4 (ESV)**

2 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Is it really possible to be saved and not want what God wants — namely, that all men be saved? This is among the first evidences of a genuine conversion: that you begin to care about the salvation of others. Consider the order of events surrounding Paul the Apostle's conversion:

- o **Acts 9:17–21 (ESV)**

17 So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; 19 and taking food, he was strengthened.

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. 20 **And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”** 21 And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?”

You can see from this passage that as soon as Saul had a genuine, transformative, encounter with God, he began preaching it to others! Once you are transformed, there is no waiting period before you can start to preach to others about the very thing that God has done for you! In fact, humbly teaching others what you have learned is one of the greatest signs of repentance.

- **Psalm 51:13 (ESV)**

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

David's repentance from his sin included a commitment to teaching others what he had just learned. This is a clear sign of true repentance!

We also want you to consider what has just happened in our chapter tonight. This is not simply a king being saved, it is a king preaching the gospel to all nations! Israel is presently in exile, overtaken by Babylon, awaiting the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple. Before any of that restoration can take place, a king preaches the gospel to all nations!

Consider what Jesus states must happen before the final destruction AND restoration of Jerusalem:

- **Matthew 24:14 (ESV)**

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

What might the final gospel being preached to all nations look like? Is it churches being planted all over the world? That may be, but in our chapter tonight, it was a few faithful Jews ministering to a king who in turn, all at once, preaches the good news of God's reign to all nations.

Remember we told you at the beginning of this session that you are Nebuchadnezzar. When we first said it, you probably thought we were insulting you. Now you probably have a better idea. We should all want to be Nebuchadnezzar. Let's pick up in verse four.

Daniel 4 : Table of Contents

1. Opening Remarks — Rethinking Nebuchadnezzar
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Daniel 4:4–9 — Contented and Prosperous

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. 5 I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me.

This is the usual state of those not fully converted. The ESV says "at ease in my house and prospering in my palace" — an apt description of those whose lives still belong entirely to themselves.

Nebuchadnezzar is at the height of his success. His kingdom is secure. His enemies have been subdued. His palace is complete. His life is comfortable. From every outward appearance, he has everything a man could want.

And then God disrupts the program.

Throughout Scripture, one of God's most common acts of mercy is to disturb a man who has become comfortable apart from Him.

Conversion is never comfortable. Way too much emphasis is put on making people feel comfortable in church. The Scripture declares:

- o **Proverbs 9:7–11 (NIV) —**

7 Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult;
whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse.
8 Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you;
rebuke a wise man and he will love you.
9 Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still;
teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.
10 **The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,**
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
11 For through me your days will be many,
and years will be added to your life.

Consider the fact that Nebuchadnezzar was a Babylonian warrior who had faced the best armies of the ancient world. There is no hint that he ever shied away from battle. In fact, the Babylonian Chronicle records that he destroyed Egypt so completely that there were no warriors left to take the field. Yet, while at ease and comfortable in his own house, he is so afflicted by a dream that he is terrified.

The salvation stories we know that contain this kind of dramatic upheaval are often far more genuine than those of people who think they somehow eased their way into the kingdom. We have never seen that actually work. Nebuchadnezzar is what we would want for every man.

Daniel 4:6-8

6 So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. 7 When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. 8 Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

It is not obvious in the NIV, but there is an underlying tone of desperation in these verses. The ESV and YLT say "**At last**, Daniel came..." This is because the Lord will make sure that a man is desperate for revelation before He will entrust the man with treasures from heaven.

Also notice that Nebuchadnezzar frequently uses the Hebrew name Daniel. This would be odd since his name had been changed decades earlier — except for the fact that they had become friends. Nebuchadnezzar likely alternates between the

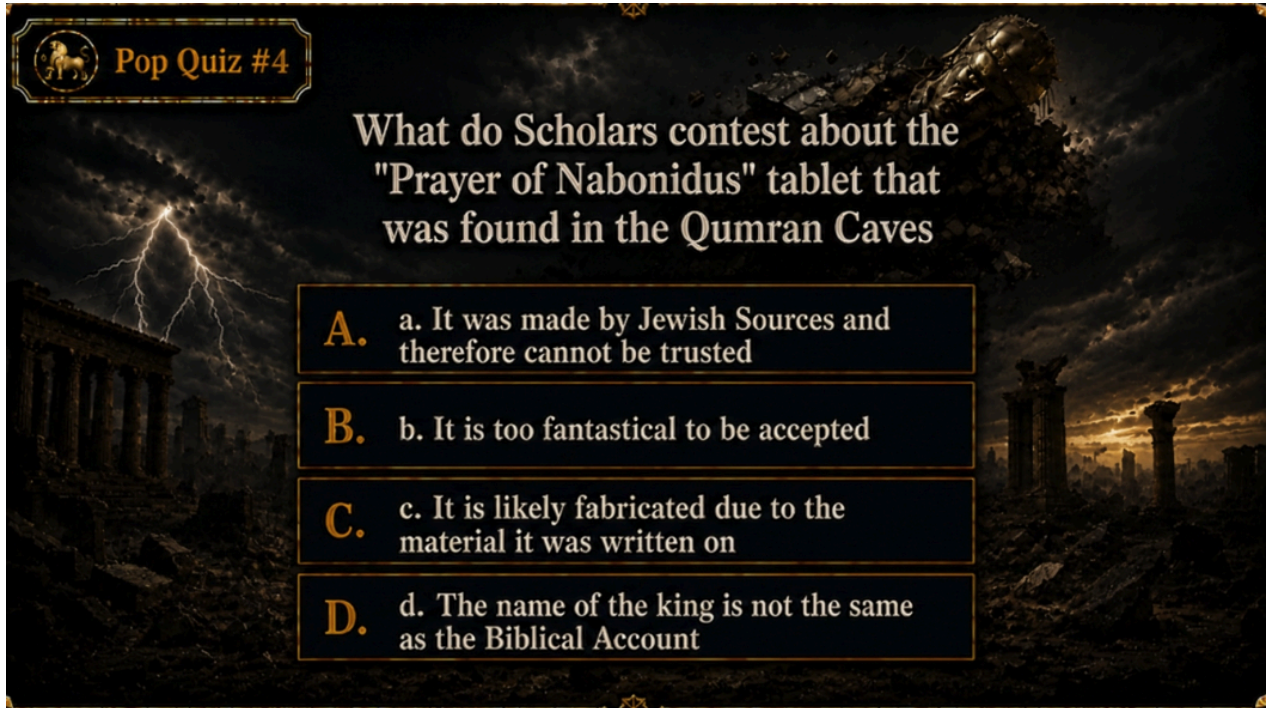
names for his Babylonian audience but personally referred to his friend by his Jewish name.

Daniel 4:9

9 I said, "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me.

You have to remember the context. Nebuchadnezzar uses the name Belteshazzar because that is the name by which Daniel holds his official Babylonian title. He is affirming both position and relationship. His language regarding "spirit of the holy gods" is likely the typical nomenclature of the Magi. But if you look closely, you will see that there is no test given as there was in chapter 2. There is no special prayer session. There is no threat of execution. There is only confidence from Nebuchadnezzar toward Daniel that he and his God can help. Something is growing inside this man.

Question 4



Pop Quiz #4

What do Scholars contest about the "Prayer of Nabonidus" tablet that was found in the Qumran Caves

- A.** a. It was made by Jewish Sources and therefore cannot be trusted
- B.** b. It is too fantastical to be accepted
- C.** c. It is likely fabricated due to the material it was written on
- D.** d. The name of the king is not the same as the Biblical Account

Daniel 4 : Table of Contents

1. Opening Remarks — Rethinking Nebuchadnezzar
2. The Historical Overview: From Sennacherib to Nebuchadnezzar
3. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Authentication of Daniel 4
4. Verses 1–3 — The Testimonial Preface
5. Verses 4–9 — Contented and Prosperous
6. Verses 10–18 — The Tree Vision
7. Verses 19–27 — Daniel Interprets the Dream
8. Verses 28–33 — The Fall and the Seven Years
9. Verses 34–37 — Restoration and Testimony

Daniel 4:10–18 — The Tree Vision.

Daniel 4:10–12

10 These are the visions I saw while lying in my bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. **11** The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. **12** Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the beasts of the field found shelter, and the birds of the air lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.

In the Bible, it is fairly common for a tree to typify a man or his life's work. In Judges 9:15 and in 2 Kings 14:9–10, you can see this type at work. Jesus even healed a blind man who then saw "men as trees" (Mark 8:24). But in this case, we relate verses 10–12 to what Jesus said about the Kingdom of Heaven:

- o **Matthew 13:31–32 (NIV)** — 31 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. 32 Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches."

It appears to us that Nebuchadnezzar's dream relates to him having seeds of the Kingdom of God — but Nebuchadnezzar was growing to produce only earthly height, earthly provision, and earthly shelter in a natural sense for Babylon. The Lord wanted something more for him, something better.

The tree would therefore be cut down. It would appear to die, yet its roots would remain alive. In this, we see one of God's great patterns throughout Scripture. Death precedes resurrection. Humility precedes exaltation. God cuts a man down only so that He might raise him up into something far greater than he ever was before.

Daniel 4:13–16

13 "In the visions I saw while lying in my bed, I looked, and there before me was a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. 14 He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. 15 But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field.

"Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. 16 Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him.

This is an ominous prediction of the seven-year tribulation period for Nebuchadnezzar's refinement and purification to become the head of gold that Adonai declared he would be. Everyone would love their own spiritual journey to be "wins only" — but that view is both naïve and arrogant. We are inherently prideful, sinful, and base in earthly ways. It is through our failures that God demonstrates His saving power that refines and restores. Job grappled with this:

o Job 14:7–9 (NIV)

7 "At least there is hope for a tree:

If it is cut down, it will sprout again,
and its new shoots will not fail.

8 Its roots may grow old in the ground
and its stump die in the soil,

9 yet at the scent of water it will bud
and put forth shoots like a plant.

We want you to know, and apparently Nebuchadnezzar wanted you to know that these humbling moments actually work salvation inside of you and they actually mature you for God's use. The seasons in which He humbles us are often the very seasons in which he accomplishes his greatest work. He cuts you down to raise you up.

- o **1 Peter 5:10–11 (NIV)**

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, **after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.** 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

I wonder how Peter knew that...? We want to challenge you to have the same mercy for Nebuchadnezzar that you want in your own life. He is a pagan king on a journey of revelation, renovation, and restoration. His life will be judged by what it produces over the whole scope of his life — and so will yours.

Daniel 4:17

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

Notice that this is no longer just about Nebuchadnezzar. The purpose of the dream is that "the living"...every future man and woman who reads this story...would learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of men.

Nebuchadnezzar sometimes acknowledged that everything he possessed came from God. At other times he believed his accomplishments were the product of his own wisdom, strength, and ability. Ironically, countless Christians continue to live in exactly the same tension. We thank God with our lips while quietly taking the credit in our hearts.

The Lord will not allow this duplicity to remain in Nebuchadnezzar — or in you. The heavenly verdict has been announced, and the same verdict was announced to you in the gospel of John:

- **John 3:19–21 (NIV)**

19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

Whenever a man believes that his accomplishments are ultimately the result of his own merit, he begins walking in darkness. Such a man resists the searching light of God's Word because he fears what it will expose. But the man who walks in the light gladly acknowledges that every good thing in his life has been accomplished through the grace and revelation of God.

What is happening to Nebuchadnezzar sounds exactly like the writer of Hebrews 600 years later:

- **Hebrews 2:1–4 (NIV)**

2 We must **pay the most careful attention**, therefore, to what we have heard, so that **we do not drift away**. 2 For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, 3 how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. 4 God also testified to it **by signs, wonders and various miracles**, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Nebuchadnezzar eventually became living proof of this very principle. The chapter opens with him proclaiming to every nation, language, and people the miraculous signs and wonders the Most High God had performed for him. As you engage with this, how eager would you be to write a Psalm 51 kind of repentance for the whole world? How eager would you be to tell the whole world that you lived in a

field for seven years like an animal? He did it only because he wanted to share the signs and wonders God had done for him.

Daniel 4:18

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

So the Lord is beginning to move on Nebuchadnezzar's heart. Gone is the suspicious king of Daniel 2 who demanded impossible proofs before he would believe. In his place stands a man who has complete confidence in Daniel and in Daniel's God. He freely admits that none of Babylon's wise men can help him, but Daniel can.

Daniel and his Jewish companions consistently represent faithful Israel throughout this book. They are the people entrusted with God's covenants, His promises, His revelation, and His glory. Nebuchadnezzar has slowly come to recognize that although Babylon possesses many wise men, true spiritual help can only come through the people who know the living God.



Daniel 4 : Table of Contents

- 1. Opening Remarks — Rethinking Nebuchadnezzar**
- 2. The Historical Overview: From Sennacherib to Nebuchadnezzar**
- 3. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Authentication of Daniel 4**
- 4. Verses 1–3 — The Testimonial Preface**
- 5. Verses 4–9 — Contented and Prosperous**
- 6. Verses 10–18 — The Tree Vision**
- 7. Verses 19–27 — Daniel Interprets the Dream**
- 8. Verses 28–33 — The Fall and the Seven Years**
- 9. Verses 34–37 — Restoration and Testimony**

Daniel 4:19–27 — Daniel Interprets the Dream

Daniel 4:19

19 Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you."

Belteshazzar answered, "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries!"

Too often, we read the Bible like Google results. We skim for information while missing the humanity of the people involved. Slow down for a moment and notice what actually happens. Notice that when Daniel hears the dream, he does not rejoice and declare that Nebuchadnezzar is going to have extraordinary difficulty — instead, he is perplexed, dismayed, and alarmed because he and the king are friends.

Secondly, when Nebuchadnezzar sees Daniel distressed, he does not say, "Hey, slave, just do what I said." He shows concern for Daniel. The king of Babylon is worried about his friend. He said: "Do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you."

Lastly, Daniel is not lying or being political — he really wishes the dream applied to Nebuchadnezzar's enemies instead of him. Like Jesus weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41–44), Daniel grieves because he knows what his friend must endure before he can become the man God intends him to be. As pastors, we are often in the position of distress over what we know it is going to take for our brothers to come into maturity in their faith. We must be impartial.

Remember, Nebuchadnezzar is writing this letter because he did make it through. You are like Nebuchadnezzar — and you will too. You'll mature just like he did.

Daniel 4:20-23

20 The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, 21 with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the beasts of the field, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds of the air— 22 you, O king, are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

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

Now that we recognize the friendship between these two men, Daniel's words carry even greater weight. This is the second reference to the coming seven year tribulation of Nebuchadnezzar.

The verse that captures the dilemma of Nebuchadnezzar's personal success coupled with his own lack of progress in spiritual development is:

- o **Mark 8:36-37**

- 36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?
- 37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

Nebuchadnezzar had gained the known world but not yet gained actual salvation! He had conquered kingdoms but had not yet surrendered his own heart. He possessed extraordinary earthly authority, yet he had not fully submitted to the authority of Heaven. How many men have sold out their souls for far less...?

Nebuchadnezzar does not stay in this condition and our hope is that none of you will either.



Pop Quiz #5

What Are the First Three Empires to Rule over Israel in Order?

A. Assyria, Egypt, Babylon

B. Egypt, Greece, Babylon

C. Egypt, Babylon, Persia

D. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon

Daniel 4:24-27

24 "This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: 25 You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes. 26 The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. 27 Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue."

While this dream and interpretation are directed to Nebuchadnezzar, each of us should take note that verse 25 says "the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men." This means that the interpretation goes way beyond Babylon. Your kingdom may be comprised of a wife and a dog, but these truths are no less applicable. He is sovereign over your life.

The Kingdom can only be restored to a man who is in a state of repentance. The gospels refer to this more than 25 times. The text itself shows us how to know if you are in true repentance:

- Renounce your sin
- Do what is right
- Stop your wickedness
- Show mercy to the oppressed

Isn't it remarkable how clearly the gospel is displayed in the book of Daniel — and remember, this is Nebuchadnezzar writing it.

o **Acts 17:24–30 (NIV)**

24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. 27 **God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.** 28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' 29 "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone — an image made by man's design and skill. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, **but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.**

God establishes kingdoms, and determines times and places. God rules over nations so that men might seek Him. And because He rules, He now commands **all people everywhere** to repent. A man is only as saved as God is sovereign in his life.

Daniel 4 : Table of Contents

1. Opening Remarks — Rethinking Nebuchadnezzar
2. The Historical Overview: From Sennacherib to Nebuchadnezzar
3. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Authentication of Daniel 4
4. Verses 1–3 — The Testimonial Preface
5. Verses 4–9 — Contented and Prosperous
6. Verses 10–18 — The Tree Vision
7. Verses 19–27 — Daniel Interprets the Dream
8. Verses 28–33 — The Fall and the Seven Years
9. Verses 34–37 — Restoration and Testimony

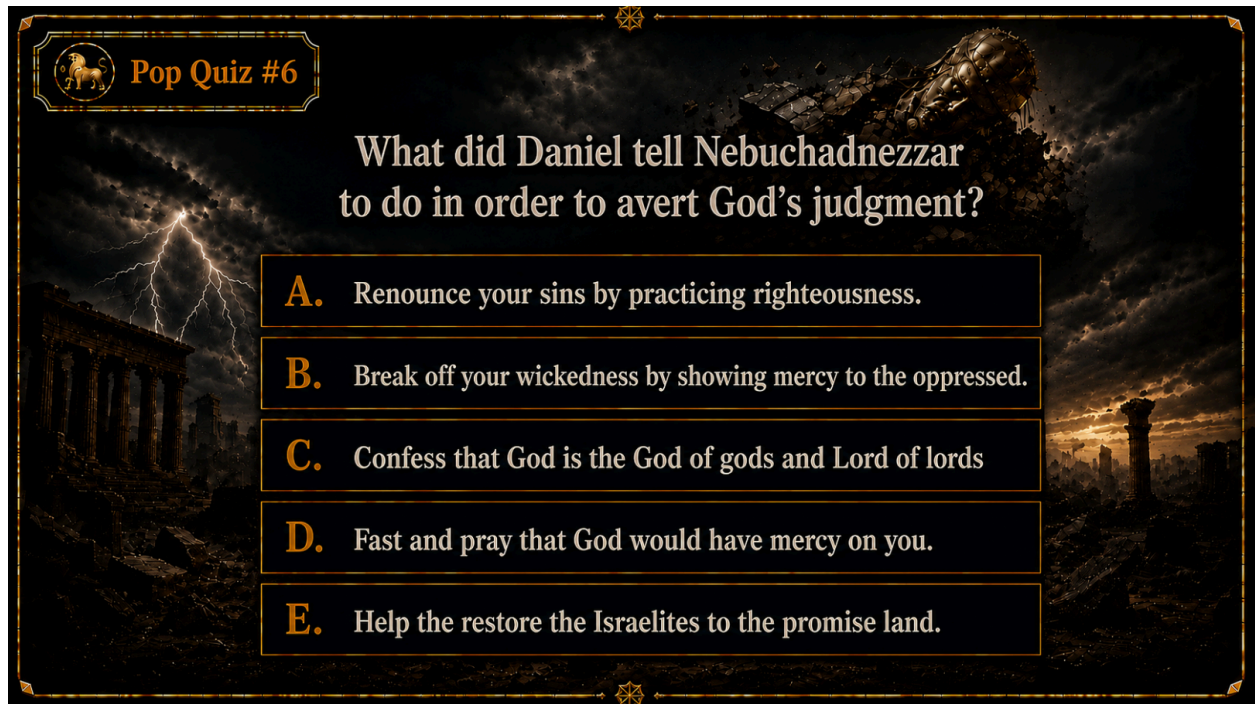
Daniel 4:28–33 — The Fall and the Seven Years

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

In this chapter Nebuchadnezzar has been warned, acknowledged the truth, and then forgot to do exactly what his was warned against. Just trying to change his own ways was not enough for Nebuchadnezzar to enter the kingdom, he needed an encounter with God that transformed his very nature. This humbling is exactly what led to that transformation.

o John 3:3 (ESV)

3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."



Pop Quiz #6

What did Daniel tell Nebuchadnezzar to do in order to avert God's judgment?

- A.** Renounce your sins by practicing righteousness.
- B.** Break off your wickedness by showing mercy to the oppressed.
- C.** Confess that God is the God of gods and Lord of lords
- D.** Fast and pray that God would have mercy on you.
- E.** Help the restore the Israelites to the promise land.

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

This is the third time the seven-year tribulation of Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned in the text. Despite the numerous spiritual experiences Nebuchadnezzar has had, and the plethora of times he has acknowledged the Most High God or his servants, Nebuchadnezzar appears to remain unregenerated. The Lord knows what it will take to transform his friend.

Even though this process seems severe, when you compare it to what happened to Herod in Acts 12:21–23 — who was stricken dead for a similar sin — it does not seem severe. Furthermore, it points to the difference between Nebuchadnezzar and Herod.

- o **Acts 12:21–23 (ESV)**

21 On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. 22 And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" 23 Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.

Nebuchadnezzar was a pagan coming to faith and being disciplined by God; Herod was a man apostatizing from his own heritage.

Notice that the voice from heaven also predicts Nebuchadnezzar's acknowledgment of heaven and restoration — similar to the announcement of Peter's time of sifting in Luke 22:31, which also included the promise of restoration. Our Father knows how to perfect His children.

- o **Luke 22:31–32 (ESV)**

31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, 32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

Truly all who seek to know the LORD will be disciplined and refined. The discipline itself is what makes you like God, provided you allow it to have its effect and then turn to strengthen others.

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

This time of tribulation lasted seven years for Nebuchadnezzar.

(Do Not Read)

CHUCK MISSLER

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

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Chuck Missler states that, "According to the Babylonian Talmud, care of Nebuchadnezzar during this period was provided by Daniel." How ironic is it that during a seven-year tribulation period for the Gentile king of the world, God used the Jewish people to minister to Nebuchadnezzar until he was saved and restored. There is a time coming on this world known as "Jacob's Trouble":

- **Jeremiah 30:7 (ESV)**

7 Alas! That day is so great
there is none like it;
it is a time of distress for Jacob;
yet he shall be saved out of it.

This Jewish man ministered to a gentile king during his time of trouble, how much more should we minister and serve the Jewish people during their time of trouble. After all, we owe our lives to them being that they have brought us life through preserving the scripture and the line of Christ!

- **Romans 11:13–15 (ESV)**

13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry 14 in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. 15 For if their rejection

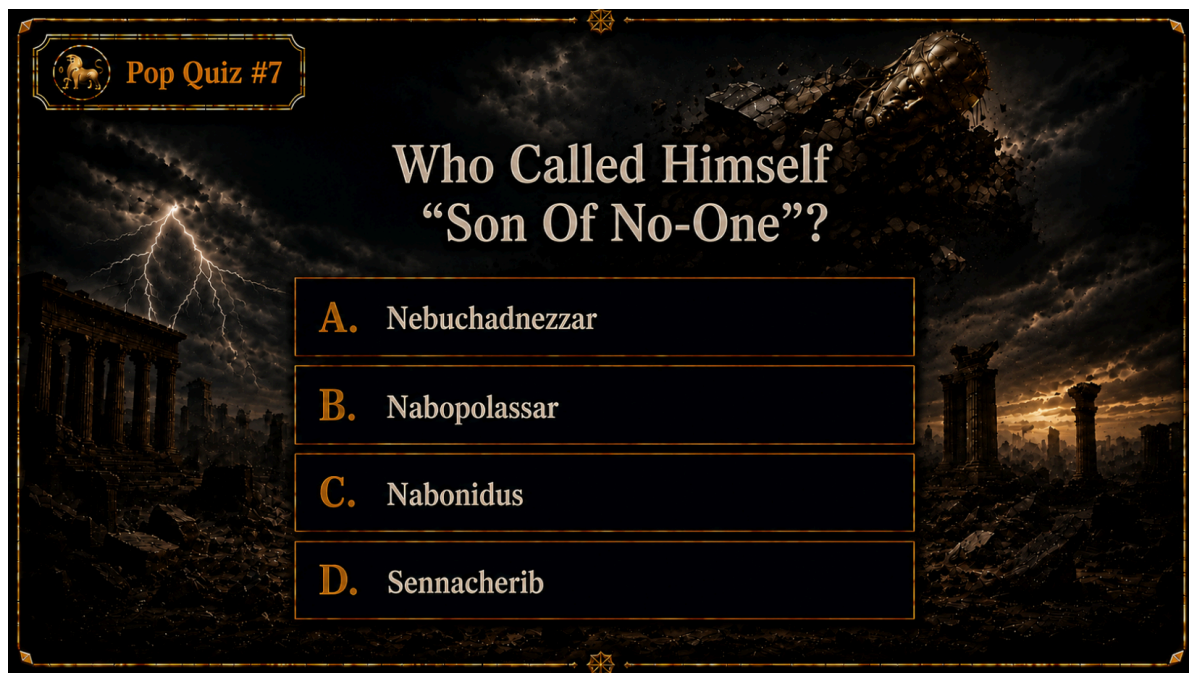
means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?

During Nebuchadnezzar's time of tribulation, a faithful Jewish remnant ministered to him so that he came out saved and restored. We are told that in our future there is a time of Jacob's Trouble — should we not return the favor? This is the very heart of Paul's aim in life and ministry!

Not only is it proper for us to suffer with Christ and his people, it is necessary for us to enter into our inheritance.

- **Romans 8:17 (ESV)**

17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.



Daniel 4 : Table of Contents

1. Opening Remarks — Rethinking Nebuchadnezzar
2. The Historical Overview: From Sennacherib to Nebuchadnezzar
3. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Authentication of Daniel 4
4. Verses 1–3 — The Testimonial Preface
5. Verses 4–9 — Contented and Prosperous
6. Verses 10–18 — The Tree Vision
7. Verses 19–27 — Daniel Interprets the Dream
8. Verses 28–33 — The Fall and the Seven Years
9. Verses 34–37 — Restoration and Testimony

Daniel 4:34–37 — Restoration and Testimony

His dominion is an eternal dominion;

his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

³⁵ All the peoples of the earth
are regarded as nothing.

He does as he pleases
with the powers of heaven
and the peoples of the earth.

No one can hold back his hand
or say to him: "What have you done?"

The results of Nebuchadnezzar's 7 year Tribulation are praises to God for his just rulership. This is the same results that come from the tribulation in the book of Revelation.

o Revelation 19:1–2 (ESV)

19 After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,

“Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,

2 for his judgments are true and just;

for he has judged the great prostitute
who corrupted the earth with her immorality,

and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

The judgments of God are just and true. These consequences for sinful pride are always aimed at producing the Bride of Christ found in Revelation 19. We would not be surprised to see Nebuchadnezzar on that day dressed in the wedding garments of Christ — because he accepted the judgments of God and was transformed through them. This is the goal for all tribulation that believers endure.

This is also the way in which Moses' unforgettable song begins:

- **Deuteronomy 32:4 (ESV)**

4 “The Rock, his work is perfect,
for all his ways are justice.
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
just and upright is he.

When the righteous go through trial they come out wiser than they began, praising God with a renewed sense of His sovereignty and grace! When the wicked go through the same trials, their hearts are hardened toward God and they come out bitter and worse off.

- **Proverbs 9:8 (ESV)**

8 Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you;
reprove a wise man, and he will love you.

Although you may not see it in your life, God is working to draw you to Himself at all times, the only question is whether you will humble yourself and praise his glorious power, or will you harden your heart and begin to hate his ways.

This chapter should stir up an immense gratefulness for the discipline of the LORD in all of us. When discipline of various kinds meets us, we must remember that he is qualifying us as children and seeking to empower us to raise our eyes toward heaven!

- **Hebrews 12:7 (ESV)**

7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons.
For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

In this chapter, God gave Nebuchadnezzar the grace of discipline and this discipline produced good fruit. Anyone who has truly been transformed should be able to recognize God's faithful hand of discipline on their lives. The more you mature in the kingdom, the less you fear the rod of discipline and the more it begins to comfort you.

o **Psalm 23:4 (ESV)**

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

³⁶ **At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before.** ³⁷
Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Nebuchadnezzar's restoration and repentance are exemplary! Notice that there are five steps to Nebuchadnezzar's repentance. If you remember from our Exodus study that 5 is the number of Grace!

(Do Not Read)

GRACE GIVEN TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR



POWER TO RAISE YOUR EYES TOWARD HEAVEN — *you cannot do this on your own*



POWER TO THINK IN RESTORED TERMS — *you cannot do this on your own*



POWER TO PRAISE THE MOST HIGH GOD — *your praise is meaningless unless His Spirit speaks through you*



POWER TO HONOR HIM WHO LIVES FOREVER — *you cannot honor Him unless He resides inside of you*



POWER TO GLORIFY HIM WHO LIVES FOREVER — *you cannot glorify Him unless He has changed your very nature*

1. Power to raise your eyes toward heaven — you cannot do this on your own
2. Power to think in restored terms — you cannot do this on your own
3. Power to praise the Most High God — your praise is meaningless unless His Spirit speaks through you
4. Power to honor him who lives forever — you cannot honor Him unless He resides inside of you
5. Power to glorify him who lives forever — you cannot glorify Him unless He has changed your very nature

This is what God does to a man who is repentant. He meets the man with the power to raise his eyes to heaven. He empowers the man to praise in a pleasing way, he allows the man to live a life glorifying to him!

How often is it that the one who appears as today's anti-Christ is tomorrow's brother! The transition from Daniel 3 to Daniel 4 is the kind of transformation we hope for in all men. We said you are Nebuchadnezzar — and you have no idea how much we hope that is true.

- o **Isaiah 49:6–7 (ESV)**

6 he says:

“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant

to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will make you as a light for the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

7 Thus says the LORD,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation,
the servant of rulers:
“Kings shall see and arise;
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves;
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

The book of Daniel displays ethnic and spiritual Israel performing the God-ordained function for which they were supernaturally birthed. If there is no Daniel, if there is no Jewish witness in Babylon, then the king of the world doesn't get saved. They are the ones with the Word of God. They are the ones with the covenant. They are the ones with the patriarchs.

It would be the highest honor if we as Gentiles would be allowed to minister to the nation of Israel in the coming time of Jacob's Trouble. To do that, it would take the kind of love for Torah, transformed heart, and character of God that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah display throughout this book. They were Jews loving an unlovable Babylonian king. We will be in the position of loving Jews who may not act in the most lovable ways. This book is a roadmap for us.

Perhaps now would be a good time to ask our Father for the same grace given to Nebuchadnezzar.