

"Signs and Wonders"

Daniel 4:1-37

This chapter gives us the episode in Nebuchadnezzar's life where he ended up living outside like "the beasts of the field." It describes for us a dream he had that Daniel interpreted for him and shows us that man's pride will always be dealt with and that God is in control of every situation of man, including the rule of a ruthless dictator.

Also found here are some great truths about the God of the Bible, the God of heaven, the God of gods, given to us by a previously ruthless, wicked king. I believe this shows that it doesn't matter who they are, God can still show Himself mighty through "signs and wonders" even to a king like Nebuchadnezzar, and that that king (or person) can realize who God is and accept Him as such. The point is, we need to testify for Christ to everyone, no matter who they are, for we don't know whom God will deal with about their sin.

The whole of this chapter is given to us by King Nebuchadnezzar to demonstrate the "signs and wonders" that God had shown to him.

Those "signs and wonders" are:

I. DECLARED – VS. 1-3, 34-37

A. Vs. 1 – this chapter starts off with a declaration from the king to his constituents about who God is – it wasn't about the dream (that was just the backdrop for the declaration), but rather it was about the God of heaven that he had previously seen in the burning fiery furnace, and that he had seen proven in

his first dream in chapter 2.

B. Vs. 2-3 – Who were the signs and wonders from? They were from "the high God."

1. The term "high God" is in reference to the many gods that the Babylonians worshipped, and Nebuchadnezzar's acknowledgment that the God of heaven was the greatest of these gods, so to speak.

Daniel 3:26

²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

2. At this point in Nebuchadnezzar's life it still seems that, although he recognized the God of heaven as a Supreme Being, he, as yet, did not acknowledge Him as his God.
3. Vs. 3 finds the king making a declaration about the signs and wonders he is about to demonstrate from an instance in his life that show how "great" and "mighty" those signs and wonders are. We find these same things stated throughout Scripture, and keep in mind it is the same God today of whom Nebuchadnezzar spoke.

Psalms 86:10

¹⁰ For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.

Psalm 92:5

⁵ O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

Psalm 104:24

²⁴ O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

Isaiah 25:1

¹ O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

Romans 11:33

³³ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Hebrews 2:3–4

³ How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

⁴ God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

4. Also found in vs. 3 is the truth of Scripture that the kingdom of God is an everlasting kingdom and His dominion is over all the earth, in every age ("from generation to generation") – there is a piece of prophecy in this that will be looked at later in our study of Daniel.

Psalm 66:7

⁷ He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

Psalm 145:13

¹³ Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

1 Timothy 1:17

¹⁷ Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 1:8

⁸ But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

Revelation 11:15

¹⁵ And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

***C. Vs. 34 – Where did they come from?
"Heaven," where "the most High" is***

1. "And at the end of the days" – when the trial was over, when God chose to allow the king to look up, to end his admonition
2. "I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven" – it wasn't until he looked up, that he took his eyes off his problem, that he took his gaze off the world, that he stopped looking at what he had done, that the king was able to see God for Who He is and to see himself for who he was.

Psalm 121:1

¹ I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

Psalm 123:1

¹ Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

Jonah 2:2-4

² And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

³ For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

⁴ Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

3. "And mine understanding returned unto me" – his sanity came back.
4. "And I blessed the most high, and I praised and honoured him..." – it was only after the king looked up and he came to his senses that he was able to realize, for good, who

God is.

D. Vs. 35-37 – Why did they come?

1. To show the God of heaven as above all others – vs. 35
 - a) The king declared that "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing" – and he is including himself in that declaration.
 - b) "And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth" – whether in heaven or on earth, God's will is going to be done – He is in control and allows to happen what happens – sometimes for our sake, sometimes for His glory, sometimes because of sin.

1 Samuel 3:18

18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

Psalm 33:9-11

9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Isaiah 14:24-27

24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

26 This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

- c) "And none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" – not even the great Nebuchadnezzar, as this story shows.

Job 9:12

12 Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

Job 33:12–13

12 Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

13 Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

Job 40:1–2

1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said,

2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

Job 42:1–2

1 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,

² I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

Acts 5:37-39

³⁷ After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

³⁸ And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

³⁹ But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

2. To not only show His power over the king, but to show His mercy to the king in restoring him – vs. 36 – this only happened because he took his eyes off of his accomplishments and put them on God (vs. 34).
3. To show that pride will always be judged – vs. 37
 - a) "Now I Nebuchadnezzar" – he had finally – after the dream and interpretation of the image, after seeing the Son of God in the burning fiery furnace, after seeing God bless Daniel and his friends – come to know that the God of heaven was far greater than any other god and that he would now recognize Him as such.
 - b) "Praise and extol and honour the King of heaven" – he was going to give Him all that was due Him, and recognize Him as the

King of all, as well as the God of all.

- c) "All whose works are truth, and his ways judgment" – again, now he seems to see God for Who He is and accepts Him as His God as well.
- d) "And those that walk in pride he is able to abase" – shows he now has humility.

Exodus 18:10–11

10 And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.

11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.

Job 40:11–12

11 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.

12 Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

James 4:6–7

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 5:1–7

1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be

revealed:

² Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

³ Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

⁴ And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

⁵ Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

⁶ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

⁷ Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

- e) One thing to note – this is the last thing that Nebuchadnezzar is found stating in the Bible. It was right after this that he gave the rule to Belshazzar and he disappears from the annals of history.

II. DREAMED – VS. 4-18

A. Vs. 4 points out that the king was "at rest" in his own house, and "flourishing" in his palace – these indicate that he had conquered all he intended to, and that he was enjoying the success of those conquests. It is generally believed that this was toward the end of his reign, 34-35 years into his reign.

B. Vs. 5-8 – This is the second dream that Nebuchadnezzar had that related to his kingdom, but this time he remembered the dream but didn't know what it meant. This is the second time as well, recorded in the Bible for us, that the Babylonian magicians and wise men couldn't interpret a dream, but Daniel could – showing to the world once again the power of Daniel's God and the powerlessness of the Babylonian gods.

C. One thing of note in this dream is the mention of "a watcher and an holy one" that "came down from heaven" (vs. 13) and the plural of that in vs. 17 – it is unclear to whom this is referring, but it is most likely angels that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream bringing the news.

[Matthew 25:31](#)

³¹ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

[Revelation 14:10](#)

¹⁰ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

III. DEFINED – VS. 19-27

A. Daniel gives the interpretation of the dream.

B. Remember, this is Nebuchadnezzar's

account of this event in his life – it's almost like a first-person account of what happened, even if he might have used a scribe, or had Daniel himself write it out.

C. Vs. 19 mentions that Daniel was "astonied for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him."

1. It would appear that Daniel knew the interpretation of the dream right away, but he didn't know how to present it to the king without upsetting him.
 - a) The word translated "astonied" here is only used once in the Old Testament and it means to be taken by surprise, dumbfounded at something.
 - b) Daniel seems to have been taken by surprise at what the dream meant, and he was troubled at finding a way to give the interpretation to the king.
2. The king put him at ease in giving the interpretation without worrying about how it would affect the king when he said "Beltshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee."
3. One thing of note here – Daniel is called "Beltshazzar" here in this episode because this was a decree, a letter, that Nebuchadnezzar sent out to his entire empire to be read among the people and the people would have known Daniel only by his Babylonian name ("Beltshazzar"). His Hebrew name ("Daniel") was used for

the sake of the Jews and his Babylonian name for the sake of the Babylonians.

D. Vs. 25 gives the actual reason for the dream – "till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" – there is no ruler on earth, never has been, and never will be, that God doesn't allow to be there for His purpose (which, oftentimes, is known only to Him).

Daniel 2:21

²¹ And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

Daniel 5:21

²¹ And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

Psalms 75:7

⁷ But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

Psalms 83:18

¹⁸ That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.

Jeremiah 27:5

⁵ I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.

Romans 13:1-2

¹ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

² Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Titus 3:1

¹ Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

1 Peter 2:13-17

¹³ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

¹⁴ Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

¹⁵ For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

¹⁶ As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

¹⁷ Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

E. Vs. 27 finds Daniel with an offer of reprieve for the king from the Lord that if he would get his heart right then the punishment for his pride would be abated – as we will see, he did not do that.

1. "Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor" – this is a type of repentance – a

change of heart that produces a change of action.

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¹⁶ As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

¹⁷ Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

2. "If it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility" – if he would have repented and gotten right and demonstrated his change of heart the event in view here would have been set aside.

Zephaniah 2:2-3

² Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you.

³ Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.

3. The lesson for us is that we need to confess our sin, repent of it, and change our behavior – if we don't chastisement will come.

1 John 1:9

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Hebrews 12:3–17

³ For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

⁴ Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

⁵ And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

⁶ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

⁷ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

⁸ But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

⁹ Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

¹⁰ For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

IV. DEMONSTRATED – VS. 28-33

A. The fulfillment of the interpretation of the dream is found here – it took a year, but the fulfillment came.

B. Vs. 30 demonstrates the pride of Nebuchadnezzar.

The building of Babylon was one of Nebuchadnezzar's principal occupations. Inscriptions for about fifty building projects have been found, usually made of brick and

sometimes of stone. Among the wonders of Nebuchadnezzar's creation were the gardens of Semiramis, the famous "hanging gardens" regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The gardens were planted on top of a building and served both to beautify and to keep the building cool from the heat of summer. They probably were in view of Nebuchadnezzar's palace. Although his palaces which he constructed were all in Babylon, there were numerous temples built in other cities. The city of Babylon itself, however, was regarded as the symbol of his power and majesty; and he spared no expense or effort to make it the most beautiful city of the world. If the construction of a great city, magnificent in size, architecture, parks, and armaments, was a proper basis for pride, Nebuchadnezzar was justified. What he had forgotten was that none of this would be possible apart from God's sovereign will.

John F. Walvoord. Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation: A Commentary (Kindle Locations 1560-1566). Kindle Edition.

C. Vs. 31 demonstrates God's condemnation upon that pride – "there fell a voice from heaven" – it doesn't say whether this was the voice of God (which I believe it was) or the voice of an angel – any way you look at it, it would have been a terrifying sound, nonetheless.

[Matthew 3:17](#)

¹⁷ And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

[John 12:28](#)

28 **Father, glorify thy name.** Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

Acts 9:3-5

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?**

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.**

D. When someone is lifted up with pride there is seldom any good to come from it.

E. There are those that say there is an actual mental illness that Nebuchadnezzar suffered from here.

Although his insanity was supernaturally imposed, it is not to be regarded as much different in its result from what might be expected if it had been produced by natural causes. The form of insanity in which men think of themselves as beasts and imitate the behavior of a beast is not without precedent. Keil designates the malady as insania zoanthropica.

Young in his treatment of this designates the disease as Boanthropy, i.e., he thought himself to be an ox, and cites Pusey as having collected considerable data on the subject. A person in this stage of insanity in his inner consciousness remains somewhat unchanged, but his outer behavior is

irrational. Young states, "Pusey adduces the remarkable case of Pere Surin, who believed himself to be possessed, yet maintained communion with God. It is true to fact, then, that Neb., although under the influence of this strange malady, could lift up his eyes unto heaven." In any case, the malady supernaturally imposed by God was supernaturally relieved at the proper time.

John F. Walvoord. Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation: A Commentary (Kindle Locations 1581-1583). Kindle Edition.

Conclusion: As has been pointed out already, the issue of this episode in the life of Nebuchadnezzar is that of pride and arrogance, thinking one is better than God. Considering it is God that is control of all, it is at His will to do what He wants with what is His.

The lesson for us, as believers, is that the signs and wonders that Nebuchadnezzar experienced in the power of God Almighty is meant to demonstrate to us that it is the same God we serve, and that that service should be done in humbleness of spirit, not with pride and arrogance. Not only is He the same God that Nebuchadnezzar saw through signs and wonders in a positive way, but it is the same God that chastised him that will chastise us.