

DANIEL 4

Nebuchadnezzar's Salvation

In this chapter we learn about Nebuchadnezzar's salvation experience. It centers on the destruction of human pride as most conversion experiences do. The apostle Paul had to go through a similar experience {**Acts 9:3-20**}. He zealously persecuted the Church {**Acts 9:1,2; 1 Corinthians 15:9,10**} thinking he was doing God a favor when in reality his own pride drove him to fight against the LORD {**Acts 26:14; Romans 10:2,3**}.

We shall come to see that it was God's grace that intervened to bring repentance & salvation to king Nebuchadnezzar so that the LORD would call him *ómy servantô* who will judge the rebellious people of Judah {**Jeremiah 25:8,9; 27:5-11; 43:7-11**}.

vv. 1-3 ➤ NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PROCLAMATION & TESTIMONY

[1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, "To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. 2 I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me. 3 How great are His signs, and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.ô]

Nebuchadnezzar begins his personal testimony by declaring it to all peoples, nations and languages that dwell on the earth. Wow! The king wanted everyone to know. The group that is addressed here is very similar in *composition* to all those in John's vision who are saved and dwelling with God in heaven:

*After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!ô ñ **Revelation 7:9,10**.*

The king desires that *ópeace is multipliedô* to people everywhere. This is a *salutation* of blessing not unlike those of the apostle Paul who began most of his letters with the *phrase* "Grace and peace to you from Godë ô. And the apostle Peter who starts his second letter by stating, *óGrace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lordë ô* This was actually a Hebrew greeting, *óShalomô* to you. It refers to a peace in the heart that only God can bring.

What a wonderful thing to have peace AND grace with our Creator and Savior, Jesus Christ. {See **Romans 5:1}.**

Nebuchadnezzar proclaims that God's signs are great and his wonders are mighty ñ He is an awesome God!

Now in contrast to his earlier attitude, the king proclaims that it is God's kingdom that is everlasting and God's dominion is for all generations.

It is on the Nebuchadnezzar's heart to proclaim the *miraculous* work that the Most High God had done in his life ñ ñsignsö & ñwondersä {This is similar to King Darius's declaration in ***Daniel 6:27***}. What a change from his previous ranting and raving about people being öë *cut into pieces and their houses turned into trash dumps*ö.

The king is speaking here after the events leading to his salvation took place with the anticipation of recounting of his conversion experience.

THE KING'S SAGA BEGINS WITH ANOTHER TROUBLING DREAMë ë ë ë ..

vv. 4-9 ➤ NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DISTRESS

[4 óI, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. 5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. 6 Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation. 8 But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, saying: 9 'Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation'.ö]

The king's salvation testimony begins with an uneventful day. He was sort of minding his own business, ñchillenö, resting in his house and flourishing in his palatial estate. The word used here for ñflourishingö literally means green or verdant. NEBUCHADNEZZAR WAS HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS AND SATISFIED.

But then the king, just as in the previous case, has another disturbing dream upon his bed and distressing visions filled his head. He sends for the wise men of Babylon just like before to make sense of it all. {See notes on *magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans* and *soothsayers* in *Daniel chapter 2* notes}.

Perhaps he did this for political reasons this time ñ he wanted to give öhis guysö first shot at interpreting the dream knowing they would not be able to. And just like before, even though Nebuchadnezzar tells them what the dream is this time, they are still incapable of interpreting it. When will this king ever learn not to rely on this Babylonian öbraintrustö?

Finally, after all the magicians were interrogated {remember that the king had put Daniel in charge of all the magicians}, Daniel {who was renamed Belteshazzar according to the king's god} comes in. By Nebuchadnezzar's own testimony Daniel was able to interpret the dream because in him was the *spirit of the Elowah* {lit.}. Some translations have *spirit of "the gods"* here and that is also a correct usage of this word. But the word is the singular derivative of *Elohiym*, a word also used for gods or the One true God. In the context of the Nebuchadnezzar's statement, the best translation is *Spirit of the Holy* {one and only} *God*.

The king now trusts Daniel to give the proper interpretation because he knows that no secret or hidden thing troubles him. The request is made for Daniel to explain and interpret the visions in the king's dream.

vv. 10-12 ➤ NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM—THE GROWING TREE

[10 *“These were the visions of my head while on my bed: I was looking, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. 11 The tree grew and became strong; its height reached to the heavens, and it could be seen to the ends of all the earth. 12 Its leaves were lovely, its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, the birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.”*]

A tree takes the center stage of the visions. Its size was so great it reached the heavens and could be seen throughout the earth. Its leaves were aesthetically pleasing, its fruit was abundant to the point that everyone could be fed by it. Even animals used it for shade from the desert heat and the birds lodged in its branches. Its fruit fed man and animals.

In the Bible a tree can represent a number of things.

- (1) *A man* {***Psalms 1:3; Isaiah 56:3; Jeremiah 17:8***}
- (2) *A nation* {***Ezekiel 31:3-14; Matthew 24:32,33***}
- (3) *Christendom* {***Matthew 13:31,32***}
- (4) *Jews & Gentiles* {***Romans 11:16-24***}

vv. 13-17 ➤ NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM—THE CUT DOWN TREE

[13 *I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. 14 He cried aloud and said thus: 'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, and the birds from its branches. 15 Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth. 16 Let his heart be changed from that of a man, let him be given the heart of a beast, and let seven times pass over him. 17 This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.”*]

The *ōwatcherō* a holy one, is obviously an *order* of Godōs created beings. A *ōwatcherō* is probably a special class of angelic being who God uses to carry out His will on earth. The book of Daniel informs us that there are many different classes of angels, all accomplishing Godōs purposes on earth {***Hebrews 1:7,14***}.

Note in verse 17 we actually learn that God has given this class of angelic being authority to make decisions on His behalf. In this case, they are given power to change the heart {the thought processes} of a man into that of a beast of the field.

Although the tree is to be (a) cut down, (b) all its branches pruned off, (c) its leaves stripped off and (d) its fruit scattered; the tree stump and roots are to be left {leaving the hope of restoration}. To guarantee this, the stump is to be fastened with an iron and bronze band.

[óLet it be wet with the dew of heaven,ë ô] Meaning he will not have a shelter but literally live outdoors like an animal.

[öë him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth.”] Note that the word used for ãgrassö here can also refer to *roots* and some forms of *vegetables*. {Water was probably to be obtained from rivers or streams.}

[öë Let his heart be changed from that of a man, let him be given the heart of a beast...”] The heart of a man was going to be changed into that of an animal. God created the land animals, creeping things and man on the 6th day. However, man is unique from the other animals in that man is created in God’s own image {**Genesis 1:26,27**} and God breathed life into the man {**Genesis 2:7**}. Therefore, this change represents a significant reduction in consciousness {i.e., intelligence}.

Before he died, Howard Hughes was apparently afflicted in a similar manner. He let his hair and fingernails grow long and he became a *recluse*. He was mentally disturbed.

[öë and seven times shall pass over you...”] Some believe this refers to 7 seasons, which would mean 1 ¾ years. But this is probably referring to 7 years since in Daniel this term is used that way {e.g., **Daniel 12:7,11,12**}.

It is interesting to note that:

- Blood was to be sprinkled 7 times on the altar of sacrifice. {**Lev. 14:7,16**}
- Oil was to be sprinkled 7 times before the LORD for cleansing {**Lev. 14:27**}
- God would judge a rebellious spirit 7 times {**Lev. 26:24-28**}
- Joshua marched around Jericho 7 times {**Josh. 6:4, 15**}
- Naaman washed 7 times in the Jordan River to be cleansed of leprosy {**2 Ki. 5:14**}
- The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified 7 times {**Psalms 12:6**}

McGee says in his notes on Daniel that the key to this chapter is found in verse 17 in the sense that Nebuchadnezzar was one of the ðlowest of menö and was made to act that way. The purpose was to humble the king so that God would get the glory and the king acknowledge God’s sovereignty over the affairs of men.

This decision is by the decree of angelic beings and its administration is by the their word. There are three things the *living* are to learn from Nebuchadnezzar’s dream:

- (1) *The Most High rules in the kingdom of men.*
- (2) *The Most High gives it to whomever He will.*
- (3) *The Most High sets over it the lowest of men.*

The King James Version uses the word ðbasestö The Aramaic word means humble, of low esteem.

In this case, they are going to give Nebuchadnezzar a form of insanity that will make him act like a grazing ox.

vv. 18,19 ➤ DANIEL'S DISTRESS OVER THE DREAM

[18 “*This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you*”. 19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. So the king spoke, and said, “*Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.*” Belteshazzar answered and said, “*My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!*”¹]

Nebuchadnezzar encourages Daniel {Belteshazzar¹} by telling him

- (a) All the wise men in my kingdom could not interpret the dream, but you can.
- (b) The *Spirit of the Holy God* {literally the *spirit of the Elowah*}² is in you.

Daniel was literally *stunned* by the dream. I think this was because he immediately recognized what the visions signified and it troubled him to think that the king would be driven from his throne in such a manner. I think Daniel liked the king.

Nebuchadnezzar reassures Daniel by telling him its all right, do not let this dream bother you.

Daniel *respectfully* tells the king he wishes the nature of the dream to be about those who hate him and its meaning be against his enemies.

vv. 20-23 ➤ DANIEL INTERPRETS THE NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

[20 *“The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which could be seen by all the earth, 21 whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home—22 it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.” 23 “And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him’;*

Daniel recounts the dream. Now we learn that the central symbol in the dream, this huge, protective, life-giving tree, is Nebuchadnezzar. Indeed, God did expand Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and make it strong. By his reign nations and people were blessed with food, peace and safety.

¹ The name Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel in honor his god, Bel.

² Some translations have *“the gods”* here and that is also a definition of this word. But the word is the singular derivative of *Elohiym*, a word also used for gods or the One true God. In the context of the Nebuchadnezzar's statement, the best translation is *Spirit of the Holy* {one and only} *God*.

So here a tree represents a man. ***Psalms 1:3*** says of the person that trusts in the LORD that

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

It is somewhat ironic that Nebuchadnezzar became like a beast of the field when God was going to make even the beasts of the field subject to him {***Jeremiah 27:6; 28:14***}. In a sense, the óoldô Nebuchadnezzar was to become subject to the ónewô Nebuchadnezzar ñ it is always amazing to see the ways in which God works.

Just as God is able to give a man the heart of a beast, so also He is able to give a man a *new heart*. The concept of a *new heart* is declared by two other prophets contemporaneous with *Daniel*; *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*. {See ***Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 11:19; 18:31; 36:26***}.

As we are told in God's Word, in Christ Jesus we become a *new creature*:

Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. – 2 Corinthians 5:16,17.

Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar does not yet trust in the LORD so his tree is going to be cut down. He will learn a hard lesson. However, Daniel repeats the promise that the tree stump and roots will remain secure symbolized by the iron and bronze bands. The king will need to go through a terrible ordeal before he gets his ñnew heartö

vv. 24-27 ➤ THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE DREAM & DANIEL'S ADVICE

[24 *this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: 25 They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. 26 And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules. 27 Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.*ö]

Daniel not only interprets the dream, but also gives its practical application. What is going to happen to Nebuchadnezzar is decreed by the Most High God.

óTheyö here probably refers to the ñwatchersö that were given authority to cause the king to flee to the fields and act like oxen. {I wonder whether the other oxen accepted his presence in the field}. They will also wet him with dew, which indicates that the king will not have a shelter but literally live outdoors like a wild animal. What a contrast to living in a palace.

[óö *and seven times shall pass over you...*"] Some believe this refers to 7 seasons, which would mean 1 ¾ years. But this is probably referring to 7 years since in *Daniel* this term is used that way {e.g., ***Daniel 12:7,11,12***}.

This is all for a good purpose though ñ for God's purpose. He wants Nebuchadnezzar as His servant in judging Judah for their rebellious attitude and gross idolatry ñ Baal worship. This means that his conversion took place sometime before 588 BC, the year his army came to Jerusalem and besieged it for 1 ½ years.

Evidently, it will take 7 years of living like an animal of the field for Nebuchadnezzar to *“know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.”*

The king is assured however, just like the stump of the tree and its roots remained, his kingdom would be restored to him once he learned that Heaven rules.

Nebuchadnezzar was going to go insane but return to his senses once he repented and turned to the Most High God.

What is sanity? It is usually defined in terms relative to the *“norm”* of the population, that is society as a whole. But is that really Biblical?

The reason that the world's morals are changing is because the definition of what is *“normal”* has changed. For example, homosexuality was once considered a mental illness until the American Association of Psychiatry declared it a normal, alternate, lifestyle. But God and His standards {Laws} never change ñ there is no *“shadow of turning”* with Him. A person will always know where they stand with God {which is why many people do not what to deal with Him}. God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

It is by the grace of God that we are kept sane ñ any one of us could quickly, through a traumatic turn of events or circumstances or a physical injury or ailment, become mentally unstable.

In his study notes on the Daniel chapter 4, J. Vernon McGee recounts the following story³:

A man went to see his psychiatrist because he was obsessed with the thought that there was someone lurking under his bed. He was a nervous wreck and losing sleep because he would constantly get up to check under his bed to see if anyone was there. The psychiatrist told him this would take at least 10 sessions to resolve at \$100 per session. The man left the psychiatrist's office but never returned. One day the psychiatrist ran into the man at a coffee shop. He asked him why he never returned and if the problem still plagued him. *“Why not?”* the man exclaimed. The psychiatrist asked the man how he was cured. *“Well, I was talking to a friend who is a carpenter and told him about my problem”* the man began. *“He fixed my problem at no charge!”* Utterly amazed, the psychiatrist asked, *“How did he do that?”* The man responded in a matter-of-fact way, *“He sawed the legs off of my bed. Now that fellow can't get under my bed!”*

A lot of people think they are getting better but they are not solving the real problems of life. People need to experience an *authentic* life and only Jesus can give that life and give it *more abundantly {John 10:10}*. The bumper sticker that says *“Know Jesus ñ No Fear”* is right on target.

³ Reference (2).

It has been said that most of the people in insane asylums could be cured if the mental instability caused by pride and guilt could be relieved. And that is exactly what repentance and faith in Jesus Christ does ñ it eliminates pride and guilt. It may be old-fashioned to some to say it this way, but it is still true ñ óUntil a person has made his/her peace with the God there is no peaceö. Note Nebuchadnezzar's statement to the nations: óPeace be multiplied to you...ö in verse 1. The king finally received that peace.

Pride and guilt make people do and say some pretty änsaneö things. Nebuchadnezzar would learn this lesson personally.

The Bible states that the öfoolö {i.e., mentally challenged person} has said in their heart that there is no God {***Psalms 14:1; 53:1***}. The world would do well to follow the guidelines given in the Bible for ñnormal behaviorä. The attitude and behavior that pleases the LORD are based on *faith* {***Hebrews 4:6***} and *righteousness* {***Micah 6:1-13***}.

The exhortation to Nebuchadnezzar was that he should repent from his sins by changing his unrighteous ways and repent of his wicked ways {willful disobedience} by showing mercy to the poor. In that way his reign will be lengthened.

vv. 28-33 ➤ NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PRIDE & JUDGMENT

[28 *All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.* 29 *At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon.* 30 *The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"* 31 *While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!* 32 *And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."* 33 *That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.]*

Nebuchadnezzar testifies that all that God wanted to happen came to pass, 1 year after he had the dream. The king was walking around his royal residence when he makes a most prideful statement:

[óIs this not Babylon which I have built for a royal dwelling?ö] Nebuchadnezzar had made the city one of the *wonders of the world* and he now takes credit for it. He implies that the city exists for the sole purpose of providing a dwelling place fit for such a king he thought he was.

[öë *by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?*"'] Note the *absolute arrogance* and pride of the king. He claims it was by his *mighty* power and solely to honor and glorify his magnificent accomplishments.

The irony of all this is that God had already shown Nebuchadnezzar his inferiority and inadequacy several times. See for example ***Daniel 1:19,20; 2:47; 3:28,29***. The king should have known better, but like many of us, he needed to learn his lesson the hard way.

Historical Babylon: The name of the city⁴ has several meanings including *óthe gate of god*, *óplace of the seat of life* and *ólife of the forest*. The mounds covering the ancient city have frequently been explored, but systematic excavations of the city were not undertaken until 1899, when Koldewey, the German excavator, began to uncover its ancient ruins in a methodical manner. (Refer also to Appendix A: Historical Notes On Babylon)

In 625 BC Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, seized the throne of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC), the greatest king of Babylon, enlarged the capital city to an area of six square miles and beautified it with magnificent buildings. This period of the city's development has been the focal point of all archaeological research done in ancient Babylon.

Nabopolassar rebuilt the temple and its ziggurat. Nebuchadnezzar enlarged and embellished the sanctuary. He raised the tower so that *óits head was in the heavens*, an expression found in the story of the Tower of Babel in **Genesis 11:1-4**, as well as in many of the building inscriptions.

The main temple area included an *outer, central and inner court*.

In the *central court* stood the shrine of Ishtar⁵ and Zamama while in the *inner court* the shrine Ekua was located. In this shrine stood the golden image of the patron god, Marduk flanked by a ziggurat or temple-tower.

This ziggurat, the ancient writers say, was 40 ft. high. On the topmost stage there was a shrine dedicated to Marduk. It is assumed that it was 50 ft. long by 70 ft. broad and 50 ft. in height. According to this, the total height was 40 ft. {ziggurat} + 50 ft. {shrine} or 90 ft. In **Daniel 3:1** we learn that the image Nebuchadnezzar made was 60 cubits or 90 feet high. Perhaps this was based on the dimensions of this ziggurat with its shrine that honored Babylon's patron god.

One of the chief works of Nebuchadnezzar was the building of Aiburshabu, the sacred *Procession Street* of the city, which extended from the main gate, the Ishtar gate, to the temple area. It was a great and magnificent causeway, built higher than the houses. Walls lined it on either side, which were decorated with color glazed enamel bricks, portraying life-size lions, dragons, and bulls in relief. The pavement was laid with blocks of stone brought from the mountains.

This procession street figured prominently on the New Year's festal day, when the procession of the gods took place. {Refer to notes on Saddam Hussein's own modern day Babylonian processional in the Appendix A of Daniel chapter 3 notes}.

⁴ **Babylon** {Babel} was the Greek name of the city written in the cuneiform script of the Babylonians, bab-ili, which means in Sem, *óthe gate of god*. The Hebrews called the country, as well as the city, Babel. This name they considered came from the root, balal, *óto confound* {Genesis 11:9}. The name in Sumerian ideographs was written Din-tir, which means *ólife of the forest*, and yet ancient etymologists explained it as meaning, *óplace of the seat of life* (shubat balaTe). Ka-dingarra, which also means, *ógate of god*, was another form of the name in Sumerian. It was also called Su-anna (which is of uncertain meaning) and Uru-azagga, *óthe holy city*.

⁵ Istar is associated with Astarte or Asteroth, the fertility goddess of the Canaanites and the Queen of Heaven that the Israelites later worshipped {see **Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19**}.

The city of Babylon also contained a palace complex or residence for the king. On the northwest side of this palace area, the famous terraced hanging gardens may have been situated. According to tradition, Nebuchadnezzar built these gardens for one of his foreign wives to remind her of the scenery of her homeland.

Herodotus, the Greek historian, has given us a picture of Babylon in his day. He says that the city was a great square, 42 miles in circuit. This, he writes, was surrounded by a moat or rampart 300 ft. high and 75 ft. wide. The city's massive double walls spanned both sides of the Euphrates River. Set into these walls were eight major gates. Numerous pagan temples were built in the city. Each brick used in Babylon's 3 and 4 story buildings were stamped with the monogram of Nebuchadnezzar.

So indeed, Babylon was a magnificent city, but it was God that gave Nebuchadnezzar the resources and knowledge to build it. The king did not give glory to God but instead glorified himself for he should have known better by now.

In verse 27 Daniel tells the king to *"...break off your sins by being righteous and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity."*

[66 *And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen...*] Nebuchadnezzar here is struck with a form of insanity for a fairly well documented medical condition.

The following is an excerpt from Barne's Notes on Daniel 4:30,31.

That such a fancy is no uncommon thing among maniacs. Numerous instances of this may be seen in the various works on insanity-- or indeed may be seen by merely visiting a lunatic asylum. One imagines that he is a king, and decks himself out with a scepter and a diadem; another that he is glass, and is filled with excessive anxiety lest he should be broken; others have regarded themselves as deprived of their proper nature as human beings; others as having been once dead, and restored to life again; others as having been dead and sent back into life without a heart; others as existing in a manner unlike any other mortals; others as having no rational soul. In all these cases, when such a fancy takes possession of the mind, there will be an effort on the part of the patient to act in exact conformity to this view of himself, and his whole conduct will be adapted to it. Nothing can convince him that it is not so; and there is no absurdity in supposing that, if the thought had taken possession of the mind of Nebuchadnezzar that he was a beast, he would live and act as a wild beast for just as it is said that he did. (Refer also to Appendix B: On Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity).

[66 *he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.*] No longer concerned with personal hygiene, Nebuchadnezzar's hair grew long and became disheveled and his fingernails grew out like the claws of a bird.

Because there are no facilities in those days, and in many places of the world today, people who are mentally deranged are driven away from society. So they would have driven Nebuchadnezzar away.

In our own inner cities many of those who can no longer function normally within society or are mentally unstable find refuge in the back alleys of city streets.

Nebuchadnezzar's son, Evil-Merodach, probably reigned in his father's stead.

The lesson of all this for us is that we should not try to build personal empires.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. ñ **Proverbs 3:5-8***

It is unfortunate that most world leaders, as well as business leaders, have not learned the truth that Nebuchadnezzar did ñ nor ever will.

Whether Nebuchadnezzar suffered off-and-on his whole life from various forms of insanity or if this specific malady⁶ struck him for the sole purpose of humbling him we may not know for sure. But either way, we know that the condition that drove the king to act like a beast of the field humbled him and led to his conversion ē ē .

vv. 34-37 ➤ NEBUCHADNEZZAR COMES TO HIS SENSES & WORSHIPS GOD

[34 *And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; he does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have You done?" 36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.]*

Now, by God's gracious intervention, Nebuchadnezzar returns to his senses. Hallelujah for God's mercy and grace and the conversion of a pagan! The Bible tells us that the angels in heaven rejoice when one is saved {**Luke 15:10**}. The same principle is evident in the parable of the prodigal son {**Luke 15:11-24**} when, in the swine pen, he came to his senses.

⁶ His case seems much like that of the maniac in the Gospels {e.g., **Luke 5:2-7**}, whose dwelling was among the tombs and in the mountains, and who shunned the society of men.

Note the evidence of Nebuchadnezzar's conversion.

- *He blesses, praises and honors the Most High, the King of Heaven, who lives forever – the LORD.*
- *He acknowledges that God's dominion is everlasting.*
- *He acknowledges that God's kingdom is not limited by generations.*
- *He acknowledges that God is sovereign in the affairs of man.*
- *God's power is supreme, no one can restrain Him & He is answerable to no one.*
- *He acknowledges that all of God's ways are true and just.*
- *He admits that God has the legitimate right to humble the prideful*

No wonder that the LORD alone is worshipped only. See for example **Revelation 4:8-11**.

The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created".

In the Book of Revelation we see a wonderful characteristic of the LORD that should comfort us. To the faithful church at Philadelphia Jesus writes,

*And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, "These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens" ñ **Revelation 3:7**.*

Such majesty causes Paul to exclaim in **Romans 11:33-36**

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

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APENDIX A: HISTORICAL NOTES ON BABYLON

Babylon {Babel} an ancient walled city was situated between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers along the banks of the latter about 30 miles southwest of modern city of Baghdad in Iraq. According to Babylonian tradition, the god Marduk built it. But **Genesis 10:8-12** tells us that Nimrod built the city as part of a complex of cities within his empire. This makes Babylon one of the oldest cities of the ancient world.

The earliest mention of Babylon is in the time of Sargon I, about 2700 BC. That monarch laid the foundations of the temple of Annnit, and also those of the temple of Amal. In the time of Dungi we learn that the place was sacked. The city evidently played a very unimportant part in the political history of Babylonia of the early period, for besides these references it is almost unknown until the time of Hammurabi, when its rise brought about a new epoch in the history of Babylonia.

The seat of power was then transferred permanently from the southern states. This resulted in the closing of the political history of the Sumerians. The organization of the empire by Hammurabi, with Babylon as its capital, placed it in a position from which it was never dislodged during the remaining history of Babylonia.

In 625 BC Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, seized the throne of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC), the greatest king of Babylon, who enlarged the capital city to an area of six square miles and beautified it with magnificent buildings. This period of the city's development has been the focal point of all archaeological research done in ancient Babylon.

In the northern part of the city there was situated what is called the North Palace on the east side of the Euphrates, which passed through the city. A little distance below this point the Arakhtu canal left the Euphrates, and passing through the southern wall rejoined the river. There was also a Middle and Southern Palace. Near the latter was located the Ishtar gate. The temple E-makh was close to the east side of the gate.

Other canals in the city were called Merodach and Libilkhegala. In the southern portion of the city was located the famous temple E-sag-ila. This fane was called by the Greek historian, the temple of Belus. Marduk or Merodach (as written in the Old Testament), the patron deity of the city, received from Enlil, as Hammurabi informs us, after he had driven the Elamites out of Babylonia, the title *bel matateq* or *lord of lands*, not the name which Enlil of Nippur had possessed. In the past there has been a confusion. The idcogram Enlil or Ellil had been incorrectly read Bel. This necessitated speaking of the old Bel and the young Bel. Beyond being called *bel*, *lord*, as all other gods were called; Enlil's name was not Bel. Marduk is the Bel of the Old Testament, as well as the god called Bel in the Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions.

The two sieges by Darius Hystaspes and the one by Xerxes destroyed much of the beauty of the city. Alexander desired to make it again a great center and to build an immense fortress in the city; but in the midst of this undertaking he died, while living in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar. The temple, though frequently destroyed, was in existence in the time of the Seleucids, but the city had long since ceased to be of any importance.

In modern times the dictator Saddam Hussein has attempted to rebuild Babylon by reconstructing many of the temple area structures as well as other ziggurats found elsewhere in Iraq. In similar fashion to Nebuchadnezzar, Saddam inscribed his name and glory into the bricks used to build the walls and structures. {Refer to the notes in Appendix A of Daniel chapter 3}.

APPENDIX B: ON NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S INSANITY {from Barnes notes}

- (1) He was a maniac-- made such by a direct Divine judgment on account of his pride, **{Daniel 4:30-31}**. The essential thing in the statement is, that he was deprived of his reason, and that he was treated as a maniac.
- (2) The particular form of the insanity with which he was afflicted seems to have been that he imagined himself to be a beast; and, this idea having taken possession of his mind, he acted accordingly. It may be remarked in regard to this,
 - (a) That such a fancy is no uncommon thing among maniacs. Numerous instances of this may be seen in the various works on insanity-- or indeed may be seen by merely visiting a lunatic asylum. One imagines that he is a king, and decks himself out with a scepter and a diadem; another that he is glass, and is filled with excessive anxiety lest he should be broken; others have regarded themselves as deprived of their proper nature as human beings; others as having been once dead, and restored to life again; others as having been dead and sent back into life without a heart; others as existing in a manner unlike any other mortals; others as having no rational soul. See Arnold "on Insanity," I. pp. 176-195. In all these cases, when such a fancy takes possession of the mind, there will be an effort on the part of the patient to act in exact conformity to this view of himself, and his whole conduct will be adapted to it. Nothing can convince him that it is not so; and there is no absurdity in supposing that, if the thought had taken possession of the mind of Nebuchadnezzar that he was a beast, he would live and act as a wild beast-- just as it is said that he did.
 - (b) In itself considered, "if" Nebuchadnezzar was deprived of his reason, and for the cause assigned-- his pride, nothing is more probable than that he would be left to imagine himself a beast, and to act like a beast. This would furnish the most striking contrast to his former state; would do most to bring down his pride; and would most effectually show the supremacy of the Most High.
- (3) In this state of mind, fancying himself a wild beast, and endeavoring to act in conformity with this view, it is probable that he would be indulged as far as was consistent with his safety. Perhaps the regency would be induced to allow this partly from their long habits of deference to the will of an arbitrary monarch; partly because by this indulgence he would be less troublesome; and partly because a painful spectacle would thus be removed from the palace. We are not to suppose that he was permitted to roam in forests at large without any restraint, and without any supervision whatever. In Babylon, attached to the palace, there were doubtless, as there are all over the East, royal parks or gardens; there is every probability that in these parks there may have been assembled rare and strange animals as a royal menagerie; and it was doubtless in these parks, and among these animals that he was allowed to range. Painful as such a spectacle would be, yet it is not improbable that to such a maniac this would be allowed, as contributing to his gratification, or as a means of restoring him to his right mind.
- (4) A king, however wide his empire, or magnificent his court, would be as likely to be subject to mental derangement as any other man. No situation in life can save the human mind from the liability to so overwhelming a calamity, nor should we deem it strange that it should come on a king as well as other men. The condition of Nebuchadnezzar, as represented by himself in this edict, was scarcely more pitiable than that of George III of England, though it is not surprising that in the eighteenth century of the Christian era, and in a Christian land, the treatment of the sovereign in such circumstances was different from that which a monarch received in pagan Babylon.
- (5) It cannot be shown that this did not come upon Nebuchadnezzar, as stated in this chapter **{Daniel 4:30-31}**, on account of his pride. That he was a proud and haughty monarch is apparent from all his history; that God would take some effectual means to humble him is in accordance with his dealings with mankind; that this would be a most effectual means of doing it cannot be doubted. No one can prove, in respect to any judgment that comes upon mankind, that it is not on account

of some sin reigning in the heart; and when it is affirmed in a book claiming to be inspired, that a particular calamity is brought upon men on account of their transgressions, it cannot be demonstrated that the statement is not true. If these remarks are correct, then no well-founded objection can lie against the account here respecting the calamity that came upon this monarch in Babylon. This opinion in regard to the nature of the affliction, which came upon Nebuchadnezzar, is probably what is now generally entertained, and it certainly meets all the circumstances of the case, and frees the narrative from material objection.

- (6) As a confirmation of its truth, I will copy here the opinion of Dr. Mead, as it is found in his "Medica Sacra:" "All the circumstances of Nebuchadnezzar's condition agree so well with a hypochondriacal madness, that to me it appears evident that Nebuchadnezzar was seized with this distemper, and under its influence ran wild into the fields; and that, fancying himself transformed into an ox, he fed on grass after the manner of cattle. Forevery sort of madness is the result of a disturbed imagination; which this unhappy man labored under for full seven years. And through neglect of taking proper care of himself, his hair and nails grew to an uncommon length; whereby the latter, growing thicker and crooked, resembled the claws of birds. Now the ancients called people affected with this kind of madness, [lukanthroopoi], "wolf-men"-- or [kunanthroopoi], "dog-men"-- because they went abroad in the night imitating wolves or dogs; particularly intent upon opening the sepulchers of the dead, and had their legs much ulcerated, either from frequent falls or the bites of dogs.