**Daniel 4**

**Nebuchadnezzar’s Madness**

**Lesson 6**

In Chapter 3 we encountered the story of the three men rescued from the fiery furnace and their prayers of contrition and thanksgiving. Chapter 4 is written in the form of a letter from Nebuchadnezzar to his subjects. His letter includes another dream that only Daniel can interpret.

1. **When did you feel closest to God this week? *Or* was there a particular verse or message in Daniel 4 that inspired you?**
2. **What do we learn about the meaning of Daniel’s Babylonian name?** **What does this confirm about Nebuchadnezzar’s belief about God?** See Dan 4:5-6 and 4:15.

**Dan 4:5-6** Finally there came before me Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar after the name of my god,[[a](#fen-NABRE-26059a)] and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods. I repeated the dream to him: **6**“Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that a spirit of the holy Gods is in you and no mystery is too difficult for you; this is the dream that I saw, tell me its meaning.

**Dan 4:15 15**“This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me its meaning. None of the wise men in my kingdom can tell me the meaning, but you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

1. In the Book of Jonah, we saw how the mercy of God was poured out on the people of Nineveh, who were not Jews, but pagans! **What do these stories, Jonah and Daniel, say about Yahweh’s relationship to non-Yahwistic societies?**
2. *Reflect on meaning*: **How do the stories of Jonah and Daniel suggest that followers of Yahweh should conduct themselves when in societies that do not believe in the One True God?**
3. **Nebuchadnezzar states that the dream terrified him. Why do you think he was so disturbed even before he received the interpretation from Daniel?**
4. **What is it that Nebuchadnezzar needs to learn before his kingdom and sanity are restored to him? See Daniel 4:21-23.**

**Daniel 4:21-23**

**21**Here is its meaning, O king, here is the sentence that the Most High has passed upon my lord king: **22**You shall be cast out from human society and dwell with wild beasts; you shall be given grass to eat like an ox and be bathed with the dew of heaven; seven years shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High is sovereign over human kingship and gives it to whom he will. **23**The command that the stump of the tree is to be left means that your kingdom shall be preserved for you, once you have learned that heaven is sovereign.

1. **What are the symptoms of the king’s madness? See Daniel 4:12-13 and 4:22 (above)?**

**Daniel 4:12-13**

Bound with iron and bronze,  
    let him be fed with the grass of the field  
    and bathed with the dew of heaven;  
    let his lot be with the beasts in the grass of the earth.  
**13**Let his mind be changed from a human one;  
    let the mind of a beast be given him,  
    till seven years pass over him.

1. **How can we apply the message of Proverbs 16 to Nebuchadnezzar? See Proverbs 16:18-20 and**

**Daniel 4:24-34**

**Proverbs 16:18-20**

Pride goes before disaster,  
    and a haughty spirit before a fall.  
**19**It is better to be humble with the poor  
    than to share plunder with the proud.  
**20**Whoever ponders a matter will be successful;  
    happy the one who trusts in the Lord!

**Daniel 4:24-30**

**24**Therefore, O king, may my advice be acceptable to you; atone for your sins by good deeds,[[c](#fen-NABRE-26078c)] and for your misdeeds by kindness to the poor; then your contentment will be long lasting.” **25**All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. **26**Twelve months later, as he was walking on the roof of the royal palace in Babylon, **27**the king said, “Babylon the great! Was it not I, with my great strength, who built it as a royal residence for my splendor and majesty?” **28**While these words were still on the king’s lips, a voice spoke from heaven, “It has been decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar, that your kingship is taken from you! **29**You shall be cast out from human society and shall dwell with wild beasts; you shall be given grass to eat like an ox, and seven years shall pass over you, until you learn that the Most High is sovereign over human kingship and gives it to whom he will.” **30**At once this was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar was cast out from human society, he ate grass like an ox, and his body was bathed with the dew of heaven, until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle, and his nails like the claws of a bird. **31**When this period was over, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes to heaven; my reason was restored to me, and I blessed the Most High, I praised and glorified the One who lives forever,

Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
    and whose kingdom endures through all generations.  
**32**All who live on the earth are counted as nothing;  
    he does as he wills with the powers of heaven  
    and with those who live on the earth.  
There is no one who can stay his hand  
    or say to him, “What have you done?”

**33**At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and my splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles sought me out; I was restored to my kingdom and became much greater than before. **34**Now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, all of whose works are right and ways just; and who is able to humble those who walk in pride.