

“From Beauty to Beast” (Daniel 4:1–37)

I have some breaking news: The President of Iran has become a Christian! In a statement posted this morning he said: “I realized recently that for the past several years I have been out of my mind. I have been acting like a beast. In the past few days God has opened my eyes. I have denounced Islam and I have trusted in the God of Israel. Yes, I now believe in Jesus Christ and I plan on spending the rest of my days serving Him.” Wow! What a stunning development! Unfortunately, it is not true. I guess you can’t believe everything you read on Facebook. But I hope this fictitious story got your attention, because another dictator who lived in the same region 2,600 years ago really did have a conversion experience. His name is Nebuchadnezzar. That’s right . . . King Nebe was converted to faith in Israel’s God and Daniel 4 is his personal testimony. It is a book within a book.¹ This is also the only chapter in Scripture written by a new believer.² In this account we will learn the truth of a very important principle: *The bigger you are; the harder you fall*. Or, if you prefer, Prov 16:18: “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

Act 1: Nebuchadnezzar’s powerful tribute (4:1–3).³ Neb begins his personal testimony with a bang: “Nebuchadnezzar⁴ the king to all the peoples, nations, and *men of every language that live in all the earth*: ‘May your peace abound!’⁵ It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me. How great are His signs and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and His dominion is from generation to generation”⁶ (4:1–3). Neb sounds a lot like the apostle Paul, doesn’t he? First, notice Neb’s burden for the world. He directs his words to “all the peoples, nations, and *men of every language that live in all the earth*” (4:1). Neb wants the entire world to hear his testimony. Little did he know that his desire would be accomplished when God included his testimony in the Bible. Second, notice that he’s not ashamed to share his conversion with others.⁷ Neb writes, “It has seemed good to me to declare . . .” (4:2). Preach it, brother! Neb has a testimony, and he’s not going to hold back! In our church membership expectations we ask our members to commit to sharing their testimony if they are called upon to do so. Although this always scares people, we believe this is very important. Your story is significant. God can and will strategically use your story in people’s lives. It is our responsibility to be prepared to share what God has done in us. Third, Neb glorifies God. He talks about God’s greatness and His might. He also refers to God as “The Most High God” (*El Elyon*) is the key phrase in this chapter. It is used six times (4:2, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34).⁸ Finally, Neb experiences God. The key phrase in these verses is “for me” (4:2). It contrasts the king’s past experience with God to this present one. Before he had only heard about God from Daniel and seen God’s miraculous intervention in the lives of others; this time his encounter with God is direct and personal.⁹ This close encounter with God left him in awe. The Bible declares: “O taste and see that the LORD is good” (Ps 34:8a). One of the blessings of coming to church is to experience God. Today, I hope that you experience the living God. One last comment, Neb’s final line in 4:3 is: “His dominion is from generation to generation.” The vision slogan of our church is: “Transferring truth to the next generation.” God’s work will go forward because, “His dominion is from generation to generation.” His program will not fail. The only question is: Will we participate in His program?

Act 2: Nebuchadnezzar receives another dream (4:4–18). We will now be reminded that Neb wasn’t always as spiritual as 4:1–3 indicates. About thirty years has elapsed between Daniel 3 and 4.¹⁰ Daniel is probably between forty–five and fifty years old. Nebuchadnezzar is approximately seventy.¹¹ The king has reigned over Babylon for about thirty–five years.¹² He is entering the best years of his life. In 4:4 he writes: “**I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace.**”¹³ Neb is living large; he has arrived. He is lacking nothing: every goblet is full of wine, every corner has an echo of music, and every chamber is a refuge from trouble. Neb is the most powerful king in the world and he has plenty of money in the Babylonian Savings and Trust. If there had been a Fortune 500 list in those days, he would have been first on the list. The man had it all!

But in 4:5, the story shifts. Neb writes, **“I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and *these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me.*”** Uh, oh—another dream. This great king who had never lost a battle, who had defeated all his enemies, who ruled as the king of kings, the head of gold, experiences fear and alarm. We would have thought fear and alarm would not be words in his personal vocabulary! Had it been an enemy force approaching his city, he would have called his forces to battle stations. But a dream! How can one defend against a dream . . . especially one sent by God? In His sovereignty, the Lord graciously disturbed Neb’s rest in order that he might experience true rest.¹⁴ I don’t know about you, but I pray for God to reveal Himself to people in dreams. I also pray for sleepless nights for people. After all, a lack of sleep can make cowards of us all. If God sends a spirit of restlessness and sleeplessness, He may bring a person to Himself. Indeed, He will do whatever it takes to work in people’s lives.

In 4:6–18, Neb shares his dream: **“So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me”** (4:6–7). Neb makes the mistake that most people, including believers, make: He looks for answers in all the wrong places. Instead of calling out to God (or God’s representative—Daniel), the king again seeks out his wise guys (cf. 2:2). Similarly, we can be guilty of seeking a conference, DVD, book, pastor, or friend to solve our woes, when God is calling us to call on Him. It’s so easy to turn to everyone and everything, and then when people and programs fail us, we turn to God as a last resort. Wouldn’t it be great if we sought God *first*? I am confident that He would pour out the resources of heaven to meet our need.

Interestingly, the king’s wise men failed to provide an interpretation. Most English versions translate 4:7b: “but they *could not* make its interpretation known to me.” But the NKJV correctly renders this phrase: “but they *did not* make known to me its interpretation.” It is fairly certain that these wise men could interpret the king’s dream. It was fairly straightforward. Their unwillingness to interpret the king’s dream came from a desire to preserve their own necks! After all, if a wise guy gave the king the correct interpretation, the king may kill him. So why take the chance, right?

Neb continues with the account of his dream in 4:8–9: **“But finally Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods;¹⁵ and I related the dream to him, saying, ‘O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell *me* the visions of my dream which I have seen,¹⁶ along with its interpretation.”** Notice the word “finally” (*ochoren*) in 4:8. It is likely that God keeps Daniel out of the picture until every sage has been tried. This ensures that God receives the greatest glory possible. Indeed, God loves to come through when every other resort has been attempted. When everyone and everything else fails, He then steps to center stage to make a way out of no way.

Now *these were* the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed: I was looking, and behold, *there was* a tree in the midst of the earth and its height *was* great. The tree grew large and became strong and its height reached to the sky, and it *was* visible to the end of the whole earth. Its foliage *was* beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it *was* food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches, and all living creatures fed themselves from it.¹⁷ I was looking in the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed, and behold, an *angelic* watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven. He shouted out and spoke as follows: ‘Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit; let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze *around it* in the new grass of the field; and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth’” (4:8–15). The strange thing is that in the beginning of the dream the tree was an “it,” but before the end of the description it becomes “him.”¹⁸

In 4:16–18, Neb continues: **“Let his mind be changed from *that of* a man and let a beast’s mind be given to him, and let seven periods of time pass over him. This sentence is by the decree of the *angelic* watchers and the decision is a command of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes and sets over it the lowliest of men. This is the dream *which* I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell *me* its interpretation, inasmuch as none of the wise men of my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.”** At this moment, it is likely that you’ve interpreted this dream, right? Even though you’re probably not an interpreter of dreams, this one is pretty easy to figure out (see below). But the question still remains as to what we are supposed to learn from the experience of an ancient, pagan king. Remember Neb opens this chapter with the promise that there will be a message for “all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* language that live in all the earth” (4:1). What is here for us in Daniel 4? The purpose clause (“in order that”) in 4:17 tells us: “. . . in order that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes and sets over it the lowliest of men.”¹⁹ This answer is repeated two more times in the chapter (4:25, 32). God wants to be seen as the Sovereign One.

Act 3: Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (4:19–27). It is now crunch time for Daniel (literally). He must put up or shut up. In 4:19 Neb writes, **“Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar,²⁰ was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, ‘Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.’ Belteshazzar replied, ‘My lord, *if only* the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries!’”** After nearly forty years of serving the king, Daniel has developed a soft spot for him. Instead of bitterly resenting the man who destroyed his homeland and took him into captivity, he has a concern for him. The only way this is possible is because Daniel was a man of prayer. Daniel’s confidence in God’s sovereignty leads him to interpret the dream: **“The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth and whose foliage *was* beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which *was* food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged--it is you, O king;²¹ for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth. In that the king saw an *angelic* watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze *around it* in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him,’ this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven [years] periods of time will pass over you, until²² you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes. And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that *it is* Heaven *that* rules”** (4:20–26). Notice the words “it is” and “that” are italicized. This last phrase in 4:26 literally reads: “Heaven rules.” What a great bumper sticker slogan. I need to patent this and make a fortune. Seriously, the phrase, “Heaven rules” is a great depiction of God’s sovereignty. Daniel closes this section in 4:27 with a call to repentance: **“Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by *doing* righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to *the* poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.”** Daniel’s interaction with King Neb shows us how to lovingly confront others. First, Daniel’s appeal is courageous. He willing risks his life. Second, Daniel’s appeal is compassionate. He likely has tears in his eyes as he delivers God’s verdict. Third, Daniel’s appeal has a context or relationship.²³ He is able to share what he does out of friendship/partnership with the king. Perhaps God is calling you to speak into someone’s life and exercise “tough love.” When you implement these characteristics, you have the greatest odds of winning over your brother or sister.

Act 4: Nebuchadnezzar experiences the fulfillment of his dream (4:28–33). Daniel has called the king to repent in 4:27. How does he respond? Neb writes, **“All *this* happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. The king reflected and said, ‘Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?’”** Note the pronouns: I . . . my . . . my. And the boastful words: “I have built . . . by the might of my power . . . the glory of my majesty.” Let me stop right here and make a simple application: Don’t ever talk like that! As they say on the street, “That’s crazy talk!” The moment you start taking credit for anything, you’re just daring God to come and smack you around.²⁴

With that said, from a human perspective, King Neb had a lot to be proud of—the man backed up his talk. Neb is known from the Babylonian Archives as a great builder.²⁵ The city tripled in size under his reign.²⁶ The walls of Babylon were 387 feet high, which is almost a third of the height of the Empire State Building, and they were 87 feet thick. Four chariots abreast could be driven on the top of the wall, and one of the great sports was to have races on them.²⁷ The processional street to which the palace gave access was 1,000 yards long and was decorated on each side by enameled bricks which displayed 120 lions and 575 dragons and bulls (Marduk and Bel symbols). There were more than fifty temples in the city.²⁸ The king’s greatest building feat was the Hanging Gardens. One of Nebuchadnezzar’s wives, the princess of Media, grew homesick for the mountains of her homeland. In order to satisfy her, the king had mountains built on the roof of the royal palace complex. These mountains were planted with trees and other kinds of plants. An ingenious hydraulic machine system was devised to lift water from the Euphrates River to water the elevated gardens. These Hanging Gardens became so famous that the Greeks named them one of the Seven Wonders of the World.²⁹

Yet, Neb’s many accomplishments didn’t give him the right to elevate himself over his fellow humans and God Himself.³⁰ God doesn’t like it when any of his creatures take credit for what He has done. He won’t share His glory with anyone and He won’t sit idly by while anyone attempts to usurp Him. Thus, we read: **“While the word [me, myself, and I] was in the king’s mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.’ Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew³¹ of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws”** (4:28–33). God moved the king from the palace to the pasture. I know what you’re thinking: This must be figurative language. It can’t be literal! I’m afraid it is quite literal. One moment he is surveying his royal kingdom, the next he is ripping off his clothing, making strange snorting noises, and galloping on all fours. Soon he is running on all fours down the main street of Babylon, totally naked and stark, raving mad. The king is not merely an insane man who has had a complete nervous breakdown. God has judged him with boanthropy: the condition where a person thinks he is a cow or a bull. One can well imagine the snide comments made by Neb’s servants: “The king’s a cow!” “Hey, where’s Neb? Oh, he’s out back grazing!” “What’s the king up to today? Oh, he’s just chewing his cud!” “I’ll be back in a minute. I’m going to milk the king.” “Anyone for Neb-burgers?”³² God used even the words of the king’s servants and sages to humble him to dust. This was necessary because the king exalted himself above God and humankind. When an act of this audacity occurs, the only appropriate affliction is to bring such an offender below the level of any human.³³ C.S. Lewis calls this way of judgment God’s “severe mercy.” He will do whatever it takes to bring us to our knees. But please remember: For twelve months the king had time to change his ways. Yet, day after day, week after week, month after month, the king refused. He hardened his heart, fell into pride, and developed a “theo-ego” (i.e., a God complex). While God is incredible patient, His patience does eventually run out. And then, His judgment can be swift and decisive, particularly for those who are arrogant and defiant. *The bigger you are; the harder you fall.*

Act 5: Nebuchadnezzar's healing and concluding doxology (4:34–37).³⁴ This chapter concludes with another hymn of praise: **“But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever;³⁵ for His dominion³⁶ is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation.³⁷ All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”** (4:34–35). The king's words are no longer “me” and “my,” but “He” and “His.” He is now consumed with God's greatness. Dan 4:35 may well be the greatest verse in Scripture on God's sovereignty. This is another clear indicator that we will see Neb in heaven. He will not be on all fours; rather, he will be standing on his own two feet or prostrating himself before God's throne. King Neb's testimony concludes in 4:36–37: **“At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven,³⁸ for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.”** Once Neb repents, God, in His grace, restores him to his former position and even prospers him. The final words are likely the key phrase: “and He [God] is able to humble those who walk in pride.”³⁹ In light of this sobering narrative, what can we do about our pride?

1. ***Pray for the early detection of pride.*** This means recognizing your propensity toward pride and catching it as quickly as possible. Do you usually think you are right? Are you easily offended? Do you not like to be corrected? Do you often complain about circumstances or people? Are you usually ungrateful? Are you often impatient with others and sometimes with God? Do you like to talk more than listen? Do you desire to be first or best? Do you need to be noticed? Are quick to find fault with others? Do you boast about achievements? Do you live beyond your means? Do you have a hard time forgiving others? If you answered “yes” to any one of these questions, I'm sure you can agree that you have pride (just like me and every other human being). Get alone with God and ask Him to identify areas of pride in your life.
2. ***Confess your pride to God and others.*** To “confess” (lit, “say the same thing”) our pride means that we own the fact that in and of ourselves we are arrogant beasts. We are not basically good people. We are generally selfish, independent, and rebellious. We need to be transparent and freely acknowledge this reality. Paul was able to write a verse in which he states for all to read: “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all” (1 Tim 1:15). May we echo Paul's humility.
3. ***Humble yourself so that God doesn't have to humiliate you.*** This has been one of my daily prayers for the past fifteen years. I know God will always humble me in my spiritual growth, but I hope and pray that He doesn't have to humiliate me due to the hardness of my heart. Instead, I want to willingly humble myself before Him. This pleases God's heart and will save me a lot of unnecessary grief and pain. Peter put it like this: “You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time” (1 Pet 5:5–6). One word of warning though: Don't make humility your aim because then you will be tempted to become proud of your motives. Instead, focus on God's greatness and then you'll be humbled before His grandeur. Remember, an arrogant person is not merely one who thinks too highly of himself or herself. Such a one simply thinks too little about God. But those whom God looks upon are those who are small in their own eyes (see Isa 66:2b; John 3:30). May you and I ensure that we are small in our own eyes and heart. For *the bigger you are; the harder you fall.*

Scripture References

Daniel 4:1–37

Psalms 18:27; 145:13

Proverbs 6:16–19; 16:18; 29:23

Isaiah 13:11; 29:16; 40:1–31; 45:9

Romans 9:14–23; 12:3, 16

Philippians 2:3–8

James 4:6

Study Questions

1. Am I excited to share my testimony of how I came to faith in Christ (Daniel 4:1–3)? Do I consider it a privilege to share my spiritual story with others? When do I find it most difficult to talk to others about Christ? How can I depend upon the Lord more, so that I can grow in my boldness? Read 2 Corinthians 5:11–15. Will I pray that the Lord’s love for me will compel me to action?
2. Why is prosperity so dangerous to people’s spiritual lives (Daniel 4:4)? Read Matthew 19:23–24; Luke 16:13; and Revelation 3:17. How has prosperity affected my life? How can I keep a vibrant spiritual life in times of prosperity? What steps must I take to avoid spiritual lethargy? Who is the most contented person I know? How can he or she help me to become more satisfied with God and what He has entrusted to me?
3. Why does God hate pride so much (Daniel 4:24–27; Proverbs 6:16–19)? What can I learn from King Nebuchadnezzar’s pride? What can I learn from Satan’s pride (Isaiah 14:12–14)? In *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis, called pride “the great sin.” Do I see the sinfulness of pride in my own life? Pride has been called “the only disease known to man that makes everyone sick except the person who has it.” How have I allowed pride to control my life?
4. How have I been guilty of forgetting God (Daniel 4:28–30)? Read Deuteronomy 8:10–18. How can I ensure that I remember God’s great character and works? How can I grow in humility? What can I learn from Jesus’ humility (Philippians 2:1–11)? Read Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; and 1 Peter 5:5.
5. Read Psalm 115:3; Proverbs 21:1; Isaiah 43:13; 45:9; 46:9–10; and Romans 9–11. What amazes me the most about God’s sovereignty (Daniel 4:34–37)? How can I cultivate deeper and greater thoughts about God? A.W. Tozer said, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

Notes

¹ Dan 4 employs the first person singular in 4:1–18, 20–27, 34–37, and the third person singular in 4:19, 28–33. This may indicate that Neb himself wrote the account and that Daniel later included it in the book.

² Scholars disagree on whether or not Neb was converted. Baldwin says no. She also believes that Neb's reference to God as "the King of heaven is indicative of his lost condition: 'This impersonal reference to God keeps Him at a distance, and this last word of Neb in the book, while formally acknowledging the power and justice of God, appears to fall short of penitence and true faith.'" Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction & Commentary*. The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1978), 116. Young argues: Also, if truly saved, why didn't Neb restore the religious culture of Israel and release the captives or display other virtues which are the fruit of regeneration? Young, on the other hand, says yes. (1) There is discernible a progress in his knowledge of God (cf. 2:47 with 3:28 and finally with 4:34–35). (2) The king acknowledges the utter sovereignty of God with respect to his own experience (4:37b). (3) The king utters true statements concerning the omnipotence of the true God (4:34–35). (4) The king would worship this God, whom he identifies as King of heaven (4:37a). Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980 [1949]), 114. To this I would add Neb's statement of faith in God's "truth and justice" (4:37).

³ It should be noted that Dan 4:1–3 in our English Bibles are actually numbered 3:31–33 in the Aramaic text. Similarly, 4:4–37 in our English Bibles are numbered 4:1–34 in the Aramaic text. Most authorities agree that the content of these three verses (Aramaic 3:31–33) is such that it fits best with Daniel 4 and thus they are included in this chapter rather than at the end of Daniel 3.

⁴ Nebuchadnezzar means, "May Nebo [a Babylonian god] guard the boundary" (cf. Dan 4:8).

⁵ This expression is also found in Dan 6:25.

⁶ "The last two chapters concluded with Nebuchadnezzar's praise of the Lord, but Daniel 4 departs from the pattern and begins (as well as ends) with Nebuchadnezzar's praise. One of the effects of this structure is to remove suspense concerning the nature of the outcome, but it does raise the reader's interest in discovering what leads to Nebuchadnezzar's joyful outburst." Tremper Longman III, *Daniel*. The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 117.

⁷ See Psalm 66:16: "Come *and* hear, all who fear God, and I will tell of what He has done for my soul."

⁸ See also Dan 3:26; 5:18, 21; 7:25. The first use of *El Elyon* as the Most High is found in Gen 14 as Abraham returns with Lot the spoil which God gave him as a result from his victory against four Gentile kings.

⁹ Zdravko Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise: Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007), 152.

¹⁰ Gleason L. Archer, Jr., "Daniel," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), Electronic ed.

¹¹ Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*. The New American Commentary, vol. 18 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 128.

¹² Isaiah 13-14 and 46-47 are oracles of judgment against Babylon, which becomes the biblical symbol of human arrogance and pride.

¹³ The picture we are given of Neb in Dan 4:4 is that of the successful and satisfied potentate, not unlike that of the rich landowner in the parable of Luke 12:15–21.

¹⁴ Paul Benware, *Daniel's Prophecy of Things to Come* (Clifton, TX: Scofield Ministries, 2007), 88.

¹⁵ This Aramaic phrase is similar to the Hebrew phrase used of Joseph in Gen 41:38. Both Joseph and Daniel served pagan kings and interpreted their dreams.

¹⁶ From these English translations it is obvious there are at least two ways to interpret the Aramaic text: (1) Nebuchadnezzar wanted Daniel to reveal the dream and its interpretation, like chapter 2 (NASB, NKJV) or (2) Nebuchadnezzar told Daniel the dream (as he did the other wise men, cf. v. 7 and NRSV, TEV, NJB) and wanted him to give the interpretation. The second makes sense contextually, but demands a revocalization of the Masoretic Consonantal Text. Bob Utley, "Daniel": www.freebiblecommentary.org.

¹⁷ Daniel's contemporary, Ezekiel, used the imagery of a tree in a similar way (Ezek 31:1–3, 5–6, 10–12).

¹⁸ David Jeremiah, *The Handwriting on the Wall: Secrets from the Prophecies of Daniel* (Dallas: Word, 1992), 91.

¹⁹ Bryan Chapell, *Standing Your Ground: A Call to Courage in an Age of Compromise* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 96–97.

²⁰ Daniel is called by his Babylonian name more in this chapter than in any other. The reason may be because he is named after Neb's god Marduk, yet he gives glory to the one true God and no other gods (see also Stefanovic, *Daniel*, 164).

²¹ There is similarity between this phrase and Nathan's words to David, "You are the man" (2 Sam 12:7).

²² The key word in this section is “until” (*ad*). This divine judgment is disciplinary, not merely punitive. For seven years (“seven times” in Hebrew) the king will live as a wild beast, having lost his mind. He will live with the beasts “until” he acknowledges that God alone is sovereign.

²³ Peel, *Living in the Lion’s Den without Being Eaten*, 103.

²⁴ Ray Pritchard, “The King Who Went Crazy” (Daniel 4): www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/2000-01-09-The-King-Who-Went-Crazy/.

²⁵ Forty-nine building inscriptions of this king have been uncovered thus far. Most of the bricks recovered from ancient Babylon bear this inscription: “I am Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon.” Renald E. Showers, *The Most High God: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1982), 45.

²⁶ Stefanovic, *Daniel*, 168.

²⁷ Jeremiah, *The Handwriting on the Wall*, 94

²⁸ Leon J. Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 119.

²⁹ Showers, *The Most High God*, 46.

³⁰ Neb’s boasting is similar to that of the Pharaoh (Exod 15:9–10) and the King of Babylon (Isa 14:13–14).

³¹ Utley, “Daniel” notes: “The temperature range in this part of the earth is 120 degrees in summer to below freezing in winter. One can imagine the physical changes which occurred in this man’s body as he lived outdoors the year round.”

³² Sam Storms, Daniel 4:1–37: www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article/41-37/.

³³ Longman, *Daniel*, 122 quotes Fewell who states: “A man who thinks he is like a god must become a beast to learn that he is only a human being.”

³⁴ Dan 4 is bracketed by two praise hymns (4:1–3; 34–37) forming an *inclusio*.

³⁵ This seems to be a play on the name YHWH from the Hebrew verb “to be” (cf. Exod 3: 14). This theological affirmation is made several times in Daniel (cf. 4:34; 6:26; 12:7).

³⁶ This poetic theological affirmation is parallel to Dan 4:3, as well as 2:44; 6:26–27.

³⁷ Ps 145:13 on the lips of a converted man (“Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations”).

³⁸ This is a title related to the concept of YHWH as king (cf. Jdg 8:23; 1 Sam 8:7; Pss 5:2; 29:10; 44:4; 47:6–8; 48:2; 68:24; 74:12; 84:3; 95:3; 97:1; 99:4; 146:10; Isa 41:21; 43:15; 44:6; 52:7).

³⁹ What are the consequences of pride? (1) Pride is hated by God (Prov 6:16-19; 8:13; 16:5). (2) Pride will not be tolerated by God (Ps 101:5b; 138:6). (3) Pride leads to conflict (Prov 13:10). (4) Pride leads to dishonor (Prov 11:2; 29:23). (5) Pride leads to destruction (Prov 15:25; 16:18).