

The Miracle Behind the Miracle

Commentary for November 14, 2020 — Nebuchadnezzar's Animal Behavior

Daniel Chapter 4 begins with a proclamation sent to all people in the world by Nebuchadnezzar. His power and dominion encompassed the entire world. The King of Babylon narrates throughout chapter 4 of Daniel. [To understand better, read it in a modern translation.]

"Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God has wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting [*alam*, Aramaic for "age-lasting"¹] kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation."

• **Daniel 4:1-3**

The proclamation concerns a terrifying second dream² of Nebuchadnezzar's and the events that followed. He sought from his wise men to interpret the dream. None could do so. At the end came Daniel, the Jewish slave, and the king told him to interpret the dream. God gave Daniel the interpretation. The dream was about the king losing his power and rule.

The First Miracle of the Second Dream

The first miracle was that Nebuchadnezzar was reduced in mental capacity and he began to act like a domestic grazing animal, as YHWH predicted:

"Let his [Nebuchadnezzar's] heart [mind] be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart [mind] be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.

... to the intent that the living may know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will, and sets up over it the basest of men.' This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen."

• **Daniel 4:16-18**

Nebuchadnezzar was to have his mind changed to that of a beast for "**seven times,**" usually understood as seven years. It was done for a reason, for all to know who rules among men. God rules and he sets up "**basest of men**" to rule over mankind.

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that he in his great kingdom was the object of the dream (verse 22). In his dream Nebuchadnezzar saw two supernatural beings descending:

"And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one [two beings] coming down from heaven, and saying,

¹ Daniel 2:4-7:8 was written in Aramaic and not Hebrew. Aramaic during the time of Daniel and Ezra the priest was the common Semitic language of Gentiles in the Near East.

² Nebuchadnezzar's first dream was in Daniel chapter 2. Daniel received YHWH's answer of what the dream was, what it meant, and told it to the Babylonian king. Daniel and his friends were promoted.

'Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him.'"

• **Daniel 4:23**

Daniel advised Nebuchadnezzar to ...

"Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto you, and [1] break off your sins by righteousness, and [2] your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of your tranquility. All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar."

• **Daniel 4:27–28**

Twelve months later, Nebuchadnezzar has not stopped his sins nor shown mercy to the poor. Suddenly, what the dream prophesied happened to Nebuchadnezzar.

"The king spoke, and said, 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of MY power, and for the honor of MY majesty?' While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, 'O king Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from you.'"

... The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."

• **Daniel 4:30–31, 33**

This first miracle concluded according to Nebuchadnezzar's own public proclamation:

"And at the end of the days [the seven years] I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and [1] I blessed the most High, and [2] I praised and [3] honored him that lives forever [for the age], whose dominion is an everlasting [eonian] dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation."

• **Daniel 4:34**

The Miracle Within the Miracle

The second miracle was not that Nebuchadnezzar came to his senses, as we read ...

"At the same time [1] my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, [2] mine honor and brightness returned unto me; and [3] my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and [4] I was established in my kingdom, and [5] excellent majesty was ADDED unto me.

Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk-in pride he is able to abase."

• **Daniel 4:36-37**

The miracle within the miracle was: God did not allow anyone to kill that vile, evil, cruel, and helpless king. Note [3], [4], and [5]. No one harmed him. He was under God's protection for those seven years. Why? Like evil King Manasseh of Judah (2 Chronicles 33:12–13), Nebuchadnezzar was restored in the counsel of God's own will (Ephesians 1:11).

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