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The Dream of the Great Tree
4: 1-37

The Fall and Rise of Nebuchadnezzar.

Chapter 4 is the last of the cycle of events in which **God** is dealing with **Nebuchadnezza**r. It is similar to **Chapter 2** in the sense that it has a dream as its centerpiece, but it stands in contrast to both **Chapters 2** and **3** because there is no hint that **Dani'el** or **his friends** are in personal danger. This **chapter** deals with **God's sovereignty** and **Nebuchadnezzar's pride**. As in **Chapter 2**, **a dream** forms the center of the action in **Chapter 4**. **King Nebuchadnezzar** is again the recipient of **a dream he** cannot interpret and, for a second time, **he** calls on the services of **Dani'el**. This **chapter** is written predominantly in the first person, though **verses 19** through **33** revert to the third person. The story is a tale of court drama in a subdued way, since it quietly shows **Dani'el** succeeding where **the Babylonian wise men** fail.[150]



As far as **God's sovereignty** is concerned, **Dani'el 4** will show, there are several

principles that were already spelled out centuries earlier in the book of **Job**, where we read: **For God speaks one, even twice, though people do not listen. He speaks in dreams, in visions of the night, when deep sleep falls upon people as they lie in their beds. He whispers in their ears and terrifies them with warnings. He makes them turn from doing wrong; He keeps them from pride. He protects them from the grave, from crossing over into sh'ol (Job 33:14-18).** According to **verse 14**, even when **God** speaks **once or twice**, **people do not listen**. Now **God** has spoken to **Nebuchadnezzar twice** thus far in **Dani'el**: in **Chapters 2** and **3**. According to **Job 33:15**, **God** speaks through **dreams and visions**, which corresponds with the description of **Nebuchadnezzar's dream** in **Dani'el 2** (**to see link click Aw – The King's Dream**). According to **Job 33:16**, **ADONAI** instructs mankind. According to **verse 17**, **He** opposes **pride**. The reason for **His** intervention is given in **verse 18**: **He** must act against **a person's pride** in order to help **the sinner** preserve **their** soul. The events described in **Dani'el Chapter 4** illustrate in practice the principles outlined in **Job**.[151]

As far as **Nebuchadnezzar's pride** is concerned, **Chapter 4** recounts **his** extraordinary transformation to an animal-like creature, roaming in the fields, before being restored to **his** former splendor. **His** insanity was a mental disorder known as lycanthropy, a rare psychiatric syndrome that involves a delusion that the affected person has transformed into a non-human animal. It was well known in pre-scientific times, but is not referred to today under that name. This is a unique chapter in the Bible because it's an official autobiographical document (except for **verses 28-33**), prepared by **the king of Babylon** and distributed throughout **his kingdom**. That **Nebuchadnezzar** should openly admit **his** pride, **his** temporary insanity, and **his** beastly behavior, and then give glory to **the God of Isra'el** for **his** recovery, is indeed a remarkable thing. **He** learned an important lesson the hard way just as people are learning it the hard way today: **Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall** (see **Proverbs Co – Pride Goes Before a Fall**).[152]

There are five "acts" in this extraordinary drama. This **chapter**, **verses 1** through **37** can be broken down in chiastic fashion, resulting in a mirror effect as the ideas are "reflected" back and forth in the passage: **A** to **A**, **B** to **B**, **with C being the climax of the chiasm**.

A. Agitation: The King's Dream – 4:4-18 (Bu)

B. Interpretation: The King's Danger – 4:19-26 (Bv)

C. Exhortation: The King's Decision – 4:27 (Bw)

B. Humiliation: The King's Discipline – 4:28-33 (Bx)

A. Redemption: The King's Deliverance – 4:34-37 and 1-3 (By)