SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



THE COMPLETE STUDY

Daniel

Chapter Four

Learning the Hard Way — Deep Dive and Workbook Companion in One

NASB 1995 | LESSON 4 | DEEP DIVE | THREE VOICES

Every workbook question from *Discovering Daniel* lesson 4 — the Scripture written out, each answer in one sentence, cross references, three teachers, critical thinking and a key question — with the **Deep Dive** woven in verse group by verse group: the Aramaic behind the king's own testimony, **Amir Tsarfati**, **John MacArthur** and **David Guzik** at length, and diagrams of the head of gold bowing, the tree and its meaning, the shape of a faithful warning, the twelve months and the seven times, and the pattern of pride across Scripture.

THE PASSAGE

Daniel 4:1–37

The dream · the fall · the praise

THE METHOD

Workbook + Deep Dive

Capture · Analyze · Compare · Execute

WHAT'S INSIDE

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One workbook lesson, one chapter, and the Deep Dive inside it — movement by movement

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"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride." — Daniel 4:37

BEFORE YOU BEGIN · THE PASSAGE

Daniel 4:1–37

Learning the Hard Way — the Testimony of a King Who Looked Up

† How to Read This Study

The workbook lesson runs in the order you work it at the table — **Capture the Scene**, **Analyze the Message**, **Compare This Passage with the Rest of Scripture**, **Execute** — with every question from *Discovering Daniel* written out, the NASB95 text under it, an answer in one sentence you can copy into the book, a cross reference, the three teachers, a point of critical thinking and a key question. Because the whole chapter is one lesson, *Capture the Scene* is read in four verse groups, and after each group the book pauses for **Going Deeper**: the Deep Dive movement for those verses — the passage marked, the Aramaic the king wrote, and the same three voices at length. Diagrams sit where the story turns. The book ends with the passage set inside the whole Bible, the three voices side by side, and questions for the table.

- **Capture the Scene** — what do I see? Observation, straight from the text, in four verse groups.
- **Going Deeper** — after each group, the Deep Dive for those verses: Aramaic, history and the three teachers.
- **Analyze the Message** — what does it say and mean? With *Discovering Daniel* open.
- **Compare** — how is it supported elsewhere in the Bible? Every cross reference written out.
- **Execute** — how does this affect my life? Off the page and into the week.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel | JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You | DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 4:37

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and △ He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

† Before the Passage

Daniel 4 is unique in the Bible: a chapter written by a pagan emperor, in his own voice, as a decree to "all the peoples, nations, and men of every language," telling the world what the God of Israel did to him. The king who dreamed of the statue (chapter 2) and built the golden image (chapter 3) here writes his own testimony — and he opens it with praise before he tells the humiliation that produced it. The date is late in

his reign; Babylon is finished, the wars are over, and the king is "at ease … and flourishing." That is when the dream came. Prosperity, not crisis, set up the fall.

Read the chapter against the two before it. Chapter 2 gave Nebuchadnezzar the truth — "your God is a God of gods" (2:47); chapter 3 showed him its power — "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego" (3:28); chapter 4 brings it home. In both earlier chapters he praised the God of other men. Here, at the end of seven years in the grass, he praises Him as his own: "I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven." Many believe this is where the head of gold finally bowed. It is the last we hear of him in Scripture.

Hold one word over the whole chapter: **ruler**. "The Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes" — said by the watcher (v. 17), by Daniel (v. 25), by the voice from heaven (v. 32), and finally by the king himself (vv. 34–35). Four times, so that "the living may know." It is the lesson of the whole book of Daniel, taught to the greatest king alive on all fours. Tsarfati reads the chapter for the times of the Gentiles and the pride of the nations; MacArthur presses the sovereignty of God and the anatomy of pride; Guzik walks the tree, the watcher, the twelve months, the bricks with the king's name on them, and the illness. All three agree on the sermon: God is able to humble those who walk in pride — and able to restore them the moment they look up.

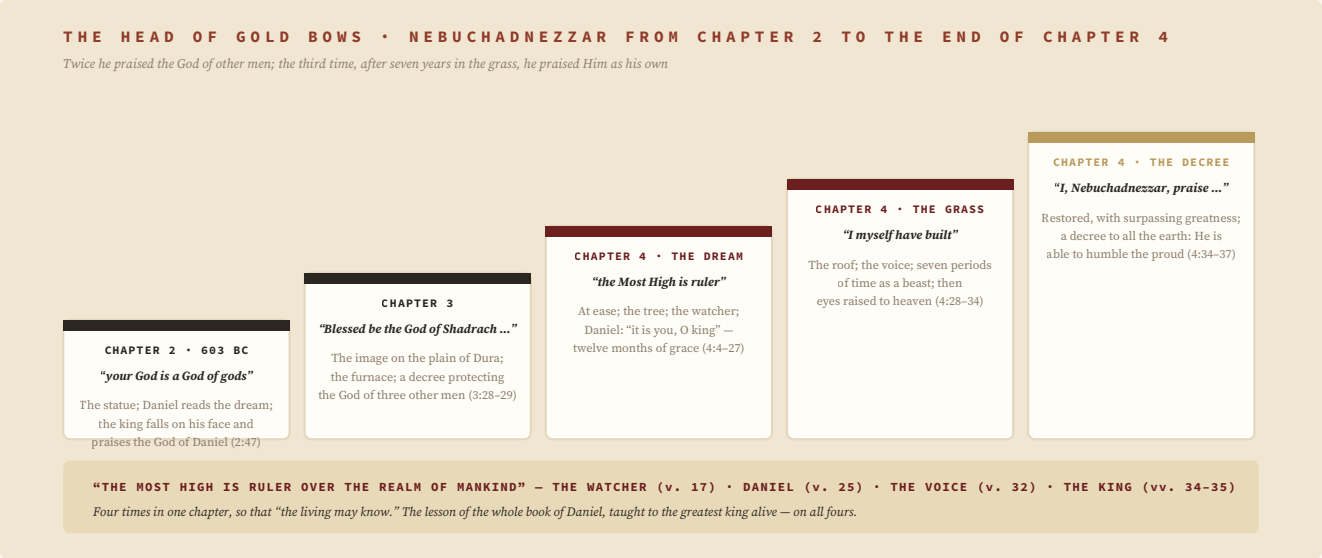


FIGURE 1 · THE HEAD OF GOLD BOWS — NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S ROAD FROM CHAPTER 2 TO THE END OF CHAPTER 4

PART ONE · DISCOVERING DANIEL · LESSON 4

DANIEL 4:1–37 · CAPTURE THE SCENE, WITH THE DEEP DIVE

Learning the Hard Way

The greatest king on earth, at ease in his palace, dreams of a tree cut down to a stump — and a watcher from heaven says the tree is him. Daniel grieves, reads it plainly, and begs him to repent. Twelve months later the king boasts on his roof, and the voice answers before he finishes the sentence. Seven years in the grass, one look up, and the head of gold writes to the whole earth that the Most High rules.

IN THIS PART

- Capture the Scene — twelve questions on Daniel 4, verse by verse, in four groups
- Going Deeper I — *At Ease in My Palace* (4:1–9)
- Going Deeper II — *The Tree and the Watcher* (4:10–18), and the tree beside its meaning
- Going Deeper III — *It Is You, O King* (4:19–27), and the shape of a faithful warning
- Going Deeper IV — *Twelve Months Later* (4:28–37), the chapter on one line, and the pattern of pride across Scripture

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

What do I see? · verses 1–9

Using my Bible, working through Daniel 4 verse by verse.

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 4:37 NASB95

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and △He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

1 What does Nebuchadnezzar proclaim in Daniel 4:1–3?

Daniel 4:1-3 · NASB95

[1] *Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound!* [2] *It has seemed good to me to declare the △signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me.* [3] *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.*

IN MY WORDS

He issues an empire-wide decree praising the Most High God for the signs and wonders done for him, confessing that God's kingdom is everlasting and His dominion endures from generation to generation.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:44** "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed" — the everlasting kingdom the king now confesses.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

This unique chapter is the testimony of a Gentile king and how God changed his heart; Nebuchadnezzar here is a witness — one who relates what he has seen and experienced — and it is good to declare what God has done for us.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

The head of gold opens his own decree by confessing that God's kingdom is the everlasting one — the very point chapter 2 made with a stone cut without hands; the times of the Gentiles is testifying against itself.

CRITICAL THINKING

The decree opens with the end of the story — praise — before telling the humiliation that produced it. A man only publishes his lowest moment once he has stopped protecting his image.

KEY QUESTION

What has God done for me that I have been reluctant to say out loud?

2 What reaction did Nebuchadnezzar have to a new dream that had come to him (verse 5)?

Daniel 4:5 · NASB95

[5] *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.*

IN MY WORDS

The dream terrified him — a powerful king lay on his bed unable to shake the fear and the visions it stirred.

CROSS REFERENCE **Job 33:14-16** God speaks in dreams and visions of the night, "then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Prosperity is the soil pride grows best in; "at ease and flourishing" is exactly when God sent the warning, because a man feels least in need of one then.

CRITICAL THINKING

All his power could conquer nations but could not quiet one night's fear. What we cannot control at three in the morning tells the truth about how little we actually rule.

KEY QUESTION

What fear surfaces when I am alone that my daytime confidence keeps hidden?

3 What happened when Nebuchadnezzar asked his wise men to interpret the dream (verse 7)?

Daniel 4:7 · NASB95

[7] *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.*

IN MY WORDS

His wise men came in, heard the dream, and could not tell him what it meant.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:27-28** the wise men cannot declare the mystery, "however, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

This is not the dream of chapter 2; the king told them plainly and they still gave no interpretation — probably lacking courage more than insight, since the dream clearly dealt with the humbling of a great king.

CRITICAL THINKING

The experts failed at the exact task they were kept for. When the message is unwelcome, the ablest counsel often goes quiet — and silence becomes its own kind of flattery.

KEY QUESTION

Whom do I keep close mainly because they will not tell me hard things?

GOING DEEPER · FROM THE DEEP DIVE

Movement I · At Ease in My Palace

DANIEL 4:1–9 · A decree to the whole earth, a king with nothing to fear — and a dream the wise men could not read

Before the workbook moves on to the tree, read the first nine verses as the Deep Dive reads them — the Aramaic for *signs and wonders*, *at ease* and *a spirit of the holy gods*, and the three teachers on a pagan emperor who opens his own testimony with praise, and on the season when the warning came.

> *"[1] Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound! [2] It has seemed good to me to declare the △ signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me. [3] 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."*
>
> DANIEL 4:1–3

אָתַיָּא וְתִמְהַיָּא

ATHAYYA VE-TIMHAYYA · "SIGNS AND WONDERS"

The decree opens with worship. *Ath* is a sign, a miraculous token; *temah* a wonder, a marvel. The king says God has done them "for me" — and then borrows Daniel's own song from 2:20–22: an everlasting kingdom, a dominion from generation to generation. A Gentile emperor is preaching the sovereignty of God to the known world on imperial letterhead.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati calls Daniel 4 the testimony of the head of gold. The man who stands at the top of the statue in chapter 2 opens his own decree by confessing that God's kingdom is the everlasting one — the very thing the stone cut without hands was going to prove. For Tsarfati the chapter is the times of the Gentiles testifying against itself: the first and greatest of the Gentile kings tells every nation that the Most High rules over the realm of mankind.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur notes the form: a royal proclamation, addressed to everyone, written in the first person. God did not merely humble Nebuchadnezzar; He made him publish it. The king who had once commanded the world to bow to a ninety-foot image now commands its attention for a sermon on the God who humbles the proud. MacArthur reads verse 3 as the thesis and the rest of the chapter as the evidence — and reminds the reader that praise that costs a man his image is the kind that is real.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik underlines the simple goodness of telling what God has done: "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so" (Psalm 107:2). The devil would rather God's works went unspoken. He notes that the king now calls Him "the Most High God," and that the praise borrows the language of Daniel's prayer in chapter 2 — the prophet's theology has become the king's. Chapter 2 gave him the truth, chapter 3 showed him its power, chapter 4 finally brings it home.

"4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace. 5 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. 6 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. 7 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. 8 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; and I related the dream to him, saying, 9 '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, along with its interpretation."

DANIEL 4:4–9

שְׁלֵה … וְרַעְנַן

SHELEH … VE-RA'ANAN · "AT EASE … FLOURISHING"

Sheleh is at rest, secure, carefree; *ra'anan* is green, luxuriant — a word for a thriving tree (Psalm 92:14). The empire is built, the wars are won, and the king is comfortable. Deuteronomy 8:11–14 warned Israel that the danger comes "when you have eaten and are satisfied." It came to Babylon the same way. The dream arrives in the palace, not on the battlefield.

רוּחַ־אֱלָהִין קַדִּישִׁין

RUACH-ELAHIN QADDISHIN · "A SPIRIT OF THE HOLY GODS"

The king still calls Daniel "Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god," and credits him with "a spirit of the holy gods" (vv. 8, 9, 18): the language of a man who respects Daniel's God without yet bowing to Him. He has seen the prophet read a dream once already; he sends for the magicians first anyway, and only "finally" for Daniel.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati stays on verse 4. The king is not in trouble when God speaks; he is at the top. Prosperity is the most dangerous season in a man's life, because it is the season he stops needing anyone — and it is in that season that God sends a dream he cannot read. Tsarfati notes the order of the summons too: the wise men first, the prophet last. Twenty years after chapter 2, the king still reaches for his own experts before he reaches for God's.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

"The visions in my mind kept alarming me." MacArthur observes that God can reach a man who has everything through the one thing he cannot control — his sleep. The king's fear is the mercy in the chapter: it is the beginning of the end of his self-sufficiency. And the failure of the wise men, again, is the point: the wisdom of Babylon can govern an empire and cannot interpret a single warning from heaven.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik suggests the dream was not hard to interpret; the wise men may have lacked courage more than insight. A tree cut down with the king in the room is a dangerous thing to explain. He notes that Daniel "came in before me" last, as in chapter 2, and that the king addresses him by his Babylonian name and in pagan terms — the king is further along than in chapter 2, and not yet home.

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

continued · verses 10–18

4 Nebuchadnezzar shared the details of the dream with Daniel. What did the king say about the tree that he saw in the dream (verses 10–12)?

Daniel 4:10-12 · NASB95

10 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. 11 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. 12 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.

IN MY WORDS

He described an enormous, beautiful tree that reached to the sky and was visible to the ends of the earth, feeding and sheltering every living creature.

CROSS REFERENCE **Ezekiel 31:3-9** Assyria pictured as a towering cedar the nations sheltered under — Scripture's image of a great empire.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

A great tree sheltering the beasts and birds is Scripture's own picture of a world empire; here it is marked for cutting, yet the stump is preserved — Gentile dominion interrupted, not annihilated.

CRITICAL THINKING

The tree's glory was real and God-given; the problem was never the greatness but who claimed to have grown it. A gift becomes an idol the moment the receiver forgets he received it.

KEY QUESTION

What good thing in my life have I quietly started calling my own achievement?

5 What did a "watcher…from heaven" command be done to the tree (verses 14–15)?

Daniel 4:14-15 · NASB95

14 *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.* 15 *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.*

IN MY WORDS

A holy watcher ordered the tree chopped down and stripped, yet commanded that the stump and its roots be left in the ground, banded with iron and bronze.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 11:22** "behold then the kindness and severity of God" — both are present in the felled tree and the spared stump.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Take the mercy literally — the stump is left; God's discipline of a man He means to restore is measured, bounded, and aimed at repentance.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

The band of iron and bronze was for the stump's confinement and protection; the tree would no longer be free and great, but it would not be destroyed.

CRITICAL THINKING

The same sentence that felled the tree also protected its stump. God's judgments on His own are never merely punitive — the fence around the roots is drawn by the same hand that swung the axe.

KEY QUESTION

Can I read a hard providence as a fence God built to keep me, and not only a blow He struck?

6 What "sentence" did this watcher warn would be imposed upon Nebuchadnezzar (verse 16)?

Daniel 4:16 · NASB95

16 *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.*

IN MY WORDS

His human mind would be taken from him and replaced with the mind of a beast, and he would remain that way for seven periods of time.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 49:20** "Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, is like the beasts that perish."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

A man who refused to acknowledge the God who made him was given the mind of a beast — precisely the creature- accountable-to-no-one he had insisted on being.

CRITICAL THINKING

The punishment simply granted the pride its logical end. A man who will not live under God does not rise above humanity; he sinks below it.

KEY QUESTION

Where does my refusal to submit actually make me less than I was made to be?

GOING DEEPER · FROM THE DEEP DIVE

Movement II · The Tree and the Watcher

DANIEL 4:10–18 · A tree to the sky, a holy one from heaven, a stump left in the grass — and a sentence with a purpose

Questions 4 to 6 asked what the king said about the tree, what the watcher commanded, and what sentence he warned of. The Deep Dive adds Ezekiel's cedar, the only "watcher" in Scripture, the stump banded with iron and bronze, and the three teachers on verse 17 — the sentence the whole book of Daniel exists to teach.

> *"10 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. 11 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. 12 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."*
>
> DANIEL 4:10–12

ILAN · "TREE"

אִילָן

A great tree was a familiar picture of a mighty ruler: Ezekiel's cedar for Assyria (31:3–14), his planted sprig for the Messiah (17:22–24). This one is "in the midst of the earth," visible "to the end of the whole earth," with food for all and shelter for every beast and bird — the Babylonian ideal of the king as provider and protector of the world. The dream is flattering until verse 13.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati reads the tree as the empire seen from the king's side: beautiful, abundant, sheltering, universal. Everything the statue of chapter 2 said in metal the tree says in leaves — and both are about to be cut. He notes that the beasts and birds are the nations Babylon fed and ruled, and that a kingdom which makes itself the tree of life for the world has forgotten whose garden it is standing in.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur draws out the appeal of the image: the king dreams of himself as the one on whom everything depends. That is the heart of pride — not cruelty but indispensability, the conviction that the world is fed from my branches. He sets the tree beside Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17: the righteous man is a tree planted by the water, and the difference is where the roots drink from.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik cites Wood: both the Assyrian and the Babylonian kings thought of themselves as rulers over all the earth, and the tree is that self-image drawn by God. He notes that nothing in verses 10–12 is a criticism; the tree is really great, the fruit really abundant. God does not deny what Nebuchadnezzar built. He is about to deny who built it.

"13 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. 14 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. 15 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. 16 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. 17 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." 18 This is the dream which I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell me its interpretation, since 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.'"

DANIEL 4:13–18

עִיר וְקַדִּישׁ

IR VE-QADDISH · "A WATCHER, A HOLY ONE"

Ir is "a wakeful one" — an angel who keeps watch; the title occurs only in this chapter of Scripture (vv. 13, 17, 23). He descends from heaven and shouts the sentence; verse 17 says it is "by the decree of the angelic watchers … a command of the holy ones" — heaven's court carrying out heaven's verdict, the same court Daniel will see in chapter 7.

עִקַּר שָׁרְשׁוֹהִי

IQQAR SHORSHOHI · "THE STUMP WITH ITS ROOTS"

Grace inside judgment. The tree is cut, but not uprooted; the stump is banded with iron and bronze and left in the grass. The kingdom will be preserved for the man while the man is removed from the kingdom. "Let his mind be changed from that of a man" — *levav*, the heart — "and let seven periods of time (*iddanin*) pass over him." Seven years, most naturally. And then the purpose clause: *in order that the living may know*.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati stops on verse 17: "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." That sentence, he says, is why the book of Daniel exists — and why Israel exists. Every empire in the statue is on loan; every king is appointed; and the lowliest men — a Jewish exile, a shepherd boy, a carpenter — are the ones God sets over it. The watcher preaches it to Babylon's king before Daniel ever opens his mouth.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

The stump is the mercy. MacArthur notes that God's judgment on Nebuchadnezzar is severe and surgical: it takes his mind, not his life; his throne for a season, not his throne forever. Discipline that leaves a stump is discipline aimed at restoration. He connects the iron and bronze band to the kingdom God was keeping safe for a man who could not keep anything safe for himself — and to Hebrews 12: the Lord disciplines the one He receives.

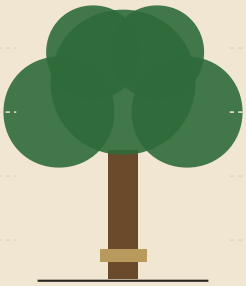
DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik takes the watcher as an angel and "seven periods of time" as seven years, and observes that the sentence is pronounced in heaven before it is explained on earth. He also notes the king's renewed appeal at verse 18: he knows Daniel can read it. For all his pride, Nebuchadnezzar has learned exactly one thing in twenty years — who to call when heaven speaks. It will turn out to be enough.

THE TREE · THE DREAM (4:10–17) AND ITS MEANING (4:20–26)

A great tree was the ancient picture of a mighty king (Ezekiel 31). Everything the statue said in metal, the tree says in leaves — and both are cut.

THE DREAM		THE MEANING
height reached to the sky — *visible to the end of the whole earth (v. 11)*		**"it is you, O king"** — *your majesty has reached to the sky (v. 22)*
foliage beautiful, fruit abundant — *"in it was food for all" (v. 12)*		**your dominion to the end of the earth** — *the provider and protector of the nations (v. 22)*
beasts in its shade, birds in its branches — *all living creatures fed from it (v. 12)*		**the nations Babylon fed and ruled** — *the beasts and birds are the peoples (v. 21)*
"Chop down the tree" — *the watcher's decree from heaven (v. 14)*		**sovereignty removed** — *driven away from mankind (vv. 25, 31)*
"leave the stump with its roots" — *a band of iron and bronze (v. 15)*		**"your kingdom will be assured to you"** — *after you recognize that Heaven rules (v. 26)*
"seven periods of time" — *a beast's mind given to him (v. 16)*		**seven years in the grass** — *"until you recognize that the Most High is ruler" (v. 25)*



the stump, banded with iron and bronze

"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" — v. 17

FIGURE 2 · THE TREE — THE DREAM (4:10–17) BESIDE ITS MEANING (4:20–26)

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

continued · verses 19–27

7 How did Daniel react upon hearing the details of the dream? And who did Daniel wish the dream could have been about (verse 19)?

Daniel 4:19 · NASB95

19 *Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, 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!*

IN MY WORDS

Daniel was appalled and deeply troubled, and wished aloud that the dream applied to the king's enemies rather than to the king himself.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 9:2-3** Paul's "great sorrow and unceasing grief" over those under judgment — the same grieving love.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Daniel genuinely cared for Nebuchadnezzar and was clearly affected by the dream — he did not want it to be true of his friend.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

A Jewish exile, taken from a burned Jerusalem by this very king, stands before him with heaven's verdict in his mouth — and grieves over it. That is what God's people are to be to the nations.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel had every reason to relish this verdict against his captor, and instead mourned it. The measure of a prophet is whether he grieves the judgment he is required to announce.

KEY QUESTION

Do I secretly enjoy the downfall of people who have wronged me?

8 What did Daniel say the tree represented (verses 20–22)?

Daniel 4:20-22 · NASB95

20 *The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth* 21 *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—* 22 *it is you, O king; 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 MY WORDS

Daniel told him plainly that the tree was the king himself — his greatness had grown until it reached the sky and his rule to the ends of the earth.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Samuel 12:7** Nathan to David: "You are the man!" — the same undiluted naming of the sin.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Daniel applied the point without ambiguity — not a general "we all could use more humility," but the truth in love, just as Nathan said to David, "you are the man."

CRITICAL THINKING

Naming the sin as "you" rather than "one" is the hardest sentence a counselor ever speaks. Vague truth comforts everyone and changes no one.

KEY QUESTION

Is there a truth I keep phrasing generally because saying "it is you" would cost me?

9 What did Daniel say the dream was foretelling about Nebuchadnezzar (verses 23–26)?

Daniel 4:24-25 · NASB95

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 *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 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.*

IN MY WORDS

He would be driven from people to live like an animal for seven periods of time, until he recognized that the Most High rules over human kingdoms and gives them to whomever He wills.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:17** the purpose stated: "that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind."

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

The sentence states its own purpose — that the living may know who really rules the realm of mankind; the times of the Gentiles is a long lesson in whose authority is only on loan.

CRITICAL THINKING

The goal of the judgment was announced in advance — "until you recognize." God's discipline always has a destination; it is aimed at a knowing, not merely at a suffering.

KEY QUESTION

What is God trying to get me to recognize through what I am walking through now?

10 What warning did Daniel then give to the king (verse 27)?

Daniel 4:27 · NASB95

27 *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."*

IN MY WORDS

Daniel urged him to break away from his sins by doing righteousness and showing mercy to the poor, so that his prosperity might be prolonged.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 28:13** "he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Repentance is not regret but a decisive turn that produces righteousness and mercy; even here God holds the door open, and a judgment announced in advance is an invitation before it is a sentence.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

He was counseled not only to stop sinning but to practice righteousness and generosity; the king could have avoided this humiliating fate had he genuinely humbled himself.

CRITICAL THINKING

Twelve months of grace stood between this warning and its execution. Mercy usually arrives as time — and time is the easiest gift to waste.

KEY QUESTION

What warning have I already been given that I am treating as if I have forever to heed it?

GOING DEEPER · FROM THE DEEP DIVE

Movement III · It Is You, O King

DANIEL 4:19–27 · A prophet appalled for his captor, a sentence read plainly, a stump promised — and a plea to repent

The interpretation and the plea. For each: the text marked, the Aramaic that carries it (*appalled*, *Heaven rules*, *break away*), and the three teachers on a captive who loved his king enough to tell him the truth and beg him to repent.

> *"19 Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, 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! 20 The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth 21 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— 22 it is you, O king; 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."*
>
> DANIEL 4:19–22

אֶשְׁתּוֹמַם

ESHTOMAM · "WAS APPALLED"

Daniel is stunned "for a while" — not because the meaning is unclear but because he cares about the man. "If only the dream applied to those who hate you!" He has served this king for decades; he grieves the judgment falling on his captor. Then he says it plainly, the way Nathan said it to David: *it is you, O king* (2 Samuel 12:7).

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati draws attention to Daniel's heart. The man who was carried off from Jerusalem by this king, who has watched him burn and boast and build, is grieved to tell him the truth. That is the posture of Israel's prophets toward the nations — Jonah excepted — and the posture God wants from His people toward the world that has hurt them. Love the man; tell him the truth; do not soften the sentence.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur calls verses 19–22 a model for every preacher. Compassion first — Daniel is appalled, and wishes it on the king's enemies instead. Then clarity: "it is you." No hedging, no third person, no "some might say." The prophet who loves the king is the one who tells him the truth to his face, and MacArthur notes that Daniel does not lower the sentence by one word because he loves him.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik connects “it is you, O king” to “You are the man!” and notes that Daniel, unlike Nathan, is a foreign captive speaking to an absolute monarch with a furnace in recent memory. He reads the greatness of verse 22 honestly — the king really had become great — and observes that the interpretation does not take that away. The problem is never that the tree is tall. It is that the tree thinks it grew itself.

“23 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,’ 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 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 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. 26 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. 27 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 4:23–27

דִּי־שַׁלִּטִן שְׁמַיָּא

DI-SHALLITIN SHEMAYYA · “THAT IT IS HEAVEN THAT RULES”

Verse 26 is the only place in the Old Testament where “Heaven” stands in for God — the usage Jesus will adopt in “the kingdom of heaven.” The stump is the kingdom “assured to you *after* you recognize” it. The condition is not survival but recognition.

פְּרָק ... בִּצְדָקָה

PERUQ … BE-TSIDQAH · “BREAK AWAY … BY DOING RIGHTEOUSNESS”

Peraq is to tear off, to break off. Daniel does not stop at the warning; he pleads: break with your sins by doing what is right, with your iniquities by *showing mercy* (*chanan*, to be gracious) *to the poor* — the people a proud king exploits (Proverbs 14:31; Isaiah 58:6–7). “In case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity”: repentance might lengthen the peace, as it did for Nineveh (Jonah 3:10).

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati reads verse 27 as the Gospel offered to a Gentile king: judgment announced, mercy available, the door held open. God did not have to warn Nebuchadnezzar at all; He warned him, interpreted the warning, and sent a prophet to beg him to repent. For Tsarfati that is the character of the God of Israel toward the nations in every age — and the reason the nations are without excuse.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

"Break away now." MacArthur notes the urgency and the specifics: not a feeling of sorrow but a change of conduct — righteousness instead of sin, mercy to the poor instead of oppression. True repentance is visible in the treasury and the courts. And "in case": Daniel does not promise the king that repentance will cancel the sentence; he promises that God is merciful and the king should act like it. MacArthur reads the next verse as the answer: twelve months of nothing.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that the counsel is practical and that it is political: a king who shows mercy to the poor has stopped treating the kingdom as his own. He points out that the stump promise (v. 26) comes before the plea (v. 27) — God announces the restoration before the fall, so that the king will know, in the grass, that the end was never in doubt. The sentence had a purpose and the purpose had a date.



FIGURE 3 · THE SHAPE OF A FAITHFUL WARNING — DANIEL BEFORE THE KING, 4:19–27

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

continued · verses 28–37

11 **A year later, what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar after he acted pridefully (verses 31–33)?**

Daniel 4:30-33 · NASB95

30 *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?"* 31 *While the word 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,* 32 *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."* 33 *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 dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.*

IN MY WORDS

While he was boasting on his rooftop that he had built Babylon by his own power, a voice from heaven removed his kingdom, and he was immediately driven out to live like an animal.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 16:18** "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling."

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

"Babylon the great, which I myself have built" echoes from this rooftop to Revelation 18 — the world system crediting itself with its own glory, which falls in a single hour.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Count the pronouns — I built, my power, my majesty. Pride relocates the glory. God let him finish the sentence but not the day.

CRITICAL THINKING

Judgment fell mid-sentence, at the peak of the boast. God's patience is not slowness; it had simply reached the exact word at which mercy had been refused long enough.

KEY QUESTION

If God interrupted my most self-satisfied sentence, what would He hear me saying?

12 After a seven-year punishment, what did Nebuchadnezzar acknowledge about God (verses 34– 37)?

Daniel 4:34-35 · NASB95

34 *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; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation.* 35 *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?'*

IN MY WORDS

He acknowledged that God's dominion is everlasting, that all the earth's inhabitants are as nothing, and that no one can restrain His hand or question what He does.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:37** his closing confession: "He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

He could see the truth about himself only after he saw the truth about God; he lifted his eyes, praised God's sovereignty, and after that his reason returned.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

The sequence is exact and worth memorizing: he looked up, and then his reason returned. Sanity is a byproduct of worship.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice what came first — not his healing, but his looking up. Clear thinking followed worship; it did not produce it. The mind is set right by bowing, not by trying harder to think straight.

KEY QUESTION

Where am I trying to reason my way to a peace that will only come when I look up?

GOING DEEPER · FROM THE DEEP DIVE

Movement IV · Twelve Months Later

DANIEL 4:28–37 · A boast on the roof, a voice before the sentence was finished, seven years in the grass — and eyes raised to heaven

The fall and the restoration. The Aramaic of the boast and of the look up, the bricks with the king's name on them, the illness, and the three teachers on the kindest severe thing God ever did to a man — and the first-person praise that ends it.

> *"28 All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. 29 Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. 30 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?" 31 While the word 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, 32 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." 33 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 dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws."*
>
> DANIEL 4:28–33

בָּבֶל רַבְּתָא … בְּתֹקֶף חִסְנִי

BAVEL RABBETA … BITQOF CHISNI · "BABYLON THE GREAT … BY THE MIGHT OF MY POWER"

A full year of grace, and then the roof: "Is this not Babylon the great, which *I myself* have built … by the might of *my* power and for the glory of *my* majesty (*hadar*)?" Archaeology confirms him as Babylon's great builder — bricks stamped with his name, inscriptions boasting of his works. The sin was never that he built it. It was the pronouns.

עוֹד מִלְּתָא בְּפֻם מַלְכָּא

OD MILLETA BE-PUM MALKA · "WHILE THE WORD WAS IN THE KING'S MOUTH"

The sentence is not finished before the voice from heaven answers it. The judgment is immediate and total: driven out, grass like cattle, drenched with dew, hair like eagles' feathers, nails like claws. Guzik and others note the rare recorded illness in which a man believes himself an animal (*boanthropy*, when an ox), and the ancient traditions of Nebuchadnezzar's strange end. God showed the king outwardly what he had become inwardly: a beast that never looks up (Psalm 49:20; 73:22).

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati sets the roof of the palace beside the plain of Shinar: the same spirit that built Babel builds Babylon, and says the same sentence — *let us make a name for ourselves*. He notes the twelve months: God kept the door open a full year after the warning, and the king walked through it the other way. Then the voice. For Tsarfati the scene is Isaiah 14 and Revelation 18 in one man: "I will ascend," and in one hour, brought down.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

"While the word was in the king's mouth." MacArthur lets the timing preach. God heard the boast as it was spoken and answered it before it was finished; there is no delay between pride and the sentence except the delay God chooses. He reads the seven years as the kindest severe thing God ever did to a man: He made the proudest king on earth live like the beast his pride had made him, until the beast looked up. The restoration required nothing but that.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik supplies the record: Nebuchadnezzar's building inscriptions, Abydenus and the traditions of the king's madness, and the form of the illness. He also supplies the sermon: pride is a kind of madness, a man forgetting what he is. And he notes that the kingdom did not fall in the seven years — the stump held, the counselors kept the throne, exactly as the band of iron and bronze had promised. God humbled the man and kept his kingdom for him.

"[34] 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; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. [35] 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?' [36] 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. [37] Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.""

DANIEL 4:34-37

עֵינַי לִשְׁמַיָּא נְטַלֵת

AYNAI LISHMAYYA NITLET · "RAISED MY EYES TOWARD HEAVEN"

One act. "I raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason (*manda*) returned to me" — the opposite of verse 30, where he looked out over his own works. Restoration begins the moment the beast looks up. Then the confession: an everlasting dominion; the inhabitants of earth "accounted as nothing"; no one can ward off His hand or ask "What have You done?" (Isaiah 40:15–17; Romans 9:20).

לְהַשְׁפָּלָה

LE-HASHPALAH · "TO HUMBLE"

Shephal, to bring low — the same root as "the lowliest of men" in verse 17. The king ends with the lesson of his life: "He is able to humble those who walk in pride." James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5–6 will say it to the church. And the praise is first person at last: not the God of Daniel, not the God of Shadrach, but "I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven."

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati reads verses 34–37 as the conversion of the head of gold — a Gentile king who ends his life praising the King of heaven. He notes that the restoration added "surpassing greatness": God did not merely give back what He took; He gave more, to a man who now knew where it came from. And he reads the last sentence as a warning to every nation in the statue: the One who humbled Babylon's king is still able.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

"My reason returned to me." MacArthur observes that sanity, in Scripture, is knowing who God is and who you are — the king was mad while he thought himself the source of his greatness and sane the moment he blessed the Most High. The praise in verse 35 is as high a doctrine of sovereignty as anything in Paul: God does according to His will, and no one can stay His hand. MacArthur believes the king was saved, and that the chapter is in the Bible so that proud men will know it is possible.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik quotes Spurgeon — "The God whom we serve not only exists, but reigns" — and traces the king's path: at ease, warned, defiant, humbled, looking up, restored. He notes that this is the last we hear of Nebuchadnezzar, and that it is a good last word: a king who once demanded worship for an image now warns the whole earth that God humbles the proud. Many believe he came to faith here. Guzik is inclined to agree.

TWELVE MONTHS, ONE SENTENCE, SEVEN TIMES · DANIEL 4:28–37 ON ONE LINE

A year of grace after the warning; a boast answered before it was finished; seven periods as a beast; one look up — and more than was taken



THE STUMP HELD

The kingdom did not fall in the seven years — the counselors and nobles kept the throne and "began seeking me out" (v. 36), exactly as the band of iron and bronze had promised (vv. 15, 26). God humbled the man and kept his kingdom for him. Discipline that leaves a stump is discipline aimed at restoration (Hebrews 12:6).

FIGURE 4 · TWELVE MONTHS, ONE SENTENCE, SEVEN TIMES — DANIEL 4:28–37 ON ONE LINE

"HE IS ABLE TO HUMBLE THOSE WHO WALK IN PRIDE" · THE PATTERN ACROSS SCRIPTURE

The same boast and the same fall, from Babylon's roof to the end of the age — and the one King who went down on purpose and was lifted up

WHO	THE BOAST	THE FALL
Nebuchadnezzar DANIEL 4:30	*"Babylon the great, which I myself have built"*	*seven years as a beast — then restored (4:33–36)*
Uzziah 2 CHRONICLES 26:16	*"when he became strong, his heart was so proud"*	*struck with leprosy at the altar; a king in isolation*
Herod Agrippa ACTS 12:22–23	*"the voice of a god and not of a man"*	*struck by an angel the same hour; no stump*
The rich fool LUKE 12:19–20	*"Soul, you have many goods laid up"*	*"this very night your soul is required of you"*
Babylon the Great REVELATION 18:7–8	*"I sit as a queen … will never see mourning"*	*"in one day her plagues will come"*
The Son of Man PHILIPPIANS 2:8–9	*"He humbled Himself … to the point of death"*	*"God highly exalted Him" — the way down is the way up*

"God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" — James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5–6. Nebuchadnezzar and Herod said the same thing; one of them had a stump.

FIGURE 5 · "HE IS ABLE TO HUMBLE THOSE WHO WALK IN PRIDE" — THE PATTERN ACROSS SCRIPTURE

PART TWO · DISCOVERING DANIEL · LESSON 4

DANIEL 4 · WHAT IT MEANS, WHERE ELSE IT IS TAUGHT, HOW I LIVE IT

Analyze, Compare, Execute

With the story captured and the Deep Dive read, the workbook turns to meaning: Nebuchadnezzar's pride and Daniel's humility side by side, the king's moment of clarity, why the stump was left, the limits of God's patience, and what the king finally affirmed — then where the rest of Scripture speaks of repeated sin, of pride before God, of Paul's boasting and his loss, and of sowing and reaping; and how to find the subtle pride in my own heart.

IN THIS PART

- Analyze the Message — five questions with *Discovering Daniel*: pride and humility compared, the brief clarity, the stump, God's patience, the king's confession
- Compare — Genesis 20, Romans 7, Exodus 20 and Isaiah 48 and Proverbs 16 on pride, Philippians 3 before and after, Galatians 6:7
- Execute — Proverbs 11, 16 and 29; Romans 12:3 on subtle pride; James 4:6; Psalm 121; Proverbs 3:5–6; Philippians 2:5–8
- Closing Thoughts, and the study helps that close the book

02 ANALYZE THE MESSAGE

What does it say and mean?

Using both my Bible and my copy of Discovering Daniel.

1 **Based on what you have read up to this point in Discovering Daniel:**

a. In what ways have you seen King Nebuchadnezzar exhibit his pride?

> IN MY WORDS
>
> He demanded that the world worship his golden image, threatened the furnace for anyone who defied him, and built Babylon as a monument to "my power" and "my majesty" — treating himself as the source of his own greatness.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 3:15** "what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

b. In what ways have you seen Daniel exhibit humility?

> IN MY WORDS
>
> He credited God rather than himself for every interpretation, quietly declined the king's food to honor God, and grieved over the very judgment falling on his captor.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:30** "this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man."

c. As you look at Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel side by side, what two or three dominant lessons do you think God wants to teach us through their examples?

> IN MY WORDS
>
> That God opposes the proud and lifts the humble; that true greatness is received and stewarded, never seized; and that God can use one faithful servant in exile to reach the most powerful and hardened people on earth.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Peter 5:5** "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

> AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel
>
> This is the quiet engine of the whole book: God glorifies His name among the nations through a faithful remnant that will not bow.

> CRITICAL THINKING
>
> Pride and humility are not opposite feelings but opposite directions — one pulls glory toward the self, the other passes it on to God. The two men differ not in ability but in where the credit goes.

KEY QUESTION

In the last week, which direction has the credit been flowing in my life?

2 **At the beginning of Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar evidently has a brief moment of clarity about "the Most High God." What does he say about God in verses 2–3? And why is this such a stunning admission coming from Nebuchadnezzar?**

Daniel 4:2-3 · NASB95

2 *It has seemed good to me to declare the* △ *signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me.* 3 *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.*

IN MY WORDS

He calls God's signs great and His wonders mighty and confesses that His kingdom is everlasting — stunning because the proudest, most idolatrous king on earth is publicly crediting the God of his Jewish captives.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 145:13** "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

This is admiration moving toward surrender; the possessive "done for me" is the whole distance between knowing about God and knowing Him.

CRITICAL THINKING

A true statement about God can be made by a heart not yet surrendered to Him. Orthodoxy on the lips is a beginning, not proof — the same king still needed seven years in the grass.

KEY QUESTION

Where might my theology be running ahead of my surrender?

3 **What is significant about the fact the tree would be chopped down, but the stump would remain and not be cut to pieces (see page 85 in Discovering Daniel)? What does this tell us about God?**

Daniel 4:15 · NASB95

15 *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.*

IN MY WORDS

The preserved stump means the judgment was disciplinary, not final — God intended all along to restore Nebuchadnezzar, not destroy him.

CROSS REFERENCE **Lamentations 3:31-32** "For the Lord will not reject forever, for if He causes grief, then He will have compassion."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

The band was both confinement and protection; the tree would no longer be free and great, but the root of it was kept alive for restoration.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

The stump preserved pictures Gentile dominion interrupted but not annihilated, running its appointed course until the times of the Gentiles are complete.

CRITICAL THINKING

God aims discipline at a future, not just a past. The stump says the goal was never to end the man but to change him — mercy wrote the sentence as surely as justice did.

KEY QUESTION

Am I reading God's correction as the end of something, when He means it as a root left for new growth?

4 **Through Nebuchadnezzar's punishment, we learn that God's patience is great, but is not unending (see page 92 in Discovering Daniel). What are some things we can learn when God shows tough-love discipline toward us?**

Hebrews 12:6 · NASB95

For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.

IN MY WORDS

We learn that discipline is evidence of God's love, that pride is worth uprooting even at real cost, and that we can grow through any hard season — whether it comes from God's correcting hand or simply from living in a fallen world.

CROSS REFERENCE **James 1:2-4** "the testing of your faith produces endurance... that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

God's discipline is measured and aimed at repentance — He wounds in order to heal, and He announces the sentence before He executes it.

CRITICAL THINKING

The point of tough love is never the pain; it is the turning. If a hard season produces only resentment and not repentance, its intended work has not yet begun.

KEY QUESTION

What is the discipline in my life trying to turn me from — and have I started to turn?

5 **In Daniel 4:34–35, what truths does Nebuchadnezzar affirm about God? What thoughts go through your mind as you consider that these words came from the mouth of the most powerful man on Earth?**

Daniel 4:35 · NASB95

35 *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?'*

IN MY WORDS

He affirms that God lives forever, rules an everlasting kingdom, does as He wills in heaven and on earth, and cannot be resisted or questioned — astonishing words from the man who once thought no god could deliver from his hand and now confesses he himself is nothing before God.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 40:17** "All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless."

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

A Gentile king humbled, restored, and turned into a herald of the God of Israel is the whole arc of the times of the Gentiles compressed into one man's lifetime.

CRITICAL THINKING

The loftiest statement of God's sovereignty in this part of Scripture comes not from a prophet but from a broken pagan king. Sometimes the clearest theology is spoken by the person God has most recently humbled.

KEY QUESTION

What has God had to strip from me before I could say honestly that He does as He wills?

03 COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE

How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?

Letting Scripture interpret Scripture.

1 **After Nebuchadnezzar had his dream about the tree, he asked his wise men to interpret it — the very men who had failed him in Daniel 2. Why didn't he go immediately to Daniel? In Genesis 12:13 Abraham told Sarah to say she was his sister; what did Abraham do again in Genesis 20:2?**

Genesis 20:2 · NASB95

Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

IN MY WORDS

Just as Abraham repeated with Abimelech the very lie he had told in Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar returned first to the counselors who had already failed him — we default to old, familiar failures instead of the God who has proven faithful.

CROSS REFERENCE **Genesis 12:13** Abraham's first version of the lie: "say that you are my sister."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Graceless men run to God only when every other refuge has failed — which is why Daniel came in "at last."

CRITICAL THINKING

We rarely repeat a sin because we have forgotten it went badly; we repeat it because it is familiar, and familiarity feels safer than surrender. The path of least resistance usually leads back to the last place we were wounded.

KEY QUESTION

What failed strategy do I keep returning to simply because it is familiar?

2 Why do you think we have a tendency to repeat our mistakes or sins instead of going to God first when we need help?

Romans 7:15 · NASB95

For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

IN MY WORDS

Because pride and self-reliance run deep, old habits are worn smooth and easy, and going to God first requires an admission of need that we instinctively resist.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 2:13** they forsook the fountain of living waters to hew "for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

The flesh defaults to self-rule; grace has to be relentless with what it means to change, and it is never in a hurry.

CRITICAL THINKING

Going to God first is not mainly a memory problem but a pride problem — it requires saying "I can't" before we have exhausted "I can." The delay is not forgetfulness; it is the ego buying time.

KEY QUESTION

At what point in a crisis do I actually turn to God — first, or last?

3 **God detests pride. Ultimately, pride causes a person to put self before God. What do the following passages have to say about pride?**

Exodus 20:3 · NASB95

You shall have no other gods before Me.

Isaiah 48:11 · NASB95

For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; for how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.

Proverbs 16:5 · NASB95

Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly, he will not be unpunished.

a. **Exodus 20:3**

IN MY WORDS

Pride enthrones self as a rival god, breaking the very first commandment.

b. **Isaiah 48:11**

IN MY WORDS

God will not share His glory — pride is theft of what belongs to Him alone.

c. **Proverbs 16:5**

IN MY WORDS

Pride is not a small flaw but something God calls an abomination that will not go unpunished.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

A proud look heads the list of what God hates; pride is the root idolatry from which the other sins grow.

CRITICAL THINKING

Each verse frames pride not as poor manners but as rival worship. That reframes every proud thought as a small theft of glory — which is why God treats it so severely.

KEY QUESTION

Whose glory am I quietly competing for?

4 **Read Philippians 3:4–6. Before Paul became a Christian, what reasons could he give for boasting about himself?**

Philippians 3:5-6 · NASB95

circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

IN MY WORDS

His pedigree, religious rank, tribal heritage, zeal, and law-keeping — an impressive résumé of self-made righteousness.

CROSS REFERENCE **Philippians 3:4** "If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Everything Paul could grasp at was recounted as loss the moment he met Christ; boasting relocates from the self to the cross.

CRITICAL THINKING

Paul's list is not of sins but of achievements — the most dangerous pride is often built out of genuinely good things. Respectable credentials can be a subtler idol than open rebellion.

KEY QUESTION

What good thing about myself am I most tempted to build my worth on?

5 **After Paul became a believer, what did he say about his accomplishments (Philippians 3:7–9)?**

Philippians 3:7-8 · NASB95

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.

IN MY WORDS

He counted all his former gains as loss — even rubbish — compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ and being found in His righteousness rather than his own.

CROSS REFERENCE **Galatians 6:14** "may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

The remnant serves God for who He is, not for what it can display; Paul emptied his own résumé in order to be filled with Christ.

CRITICAL THINKING

Paul didn't merely re-rank his credentials; he reclassified them as loss. Conversion is not adding Christ to an impressive life but counting the impressiveness as nothing next to Him.

KEY QUESTION

What would it look like to move something from my "gain" column to my "loss" column this week?

6 **Galatians 6:7 says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."**

Galatians 6:7 · NASB95

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

a. **Based on what we have read about Nebuchadnezzar so far, in what ways had he mocked God?**

IN MY WORDS

He mocked God by seizing glory that belonged to Him, demanding worship of himself and his image, and ignoring a full year of clear warning.

b. **In what ways did he reap what he sowed?**

IN MY WORDS

He reaped exactly what he sowed — the man who exalted himself above humanity was reduced below it, to live as a beast in the field.

c. **What should we personally take to heart from Galatians 6:7?**

IN MY WORDS

That God cannot be fooled, that every sowing has a harvest, and that the time to change the crop is at the sowing, not the reaping.

CROSS REFERENCE **Job 4:8** "those who plow iniquity and those who sow trouble harvest it."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

God will glorify Himself among the nations; the king who once put the temple treasures in the house of his gods learned at last which God is true.

CRITICAL THINKING

The punishment was not arbitrary; it was the harvest of the exact seed. Sowing feels free because the reaping is delayed — but delay is not the same as escape.

KEY QUESTION

What am I sowing right now whose harvest I have not yet let myself picture?

04 EXECUTE

How does this affect my life?

Bringing Daniel 4 home to my own walk.

1 **Proverbs 16:5 says, "Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord." According to the following passages, what are among the consequences of pride?**

Proverbs 11:2 · NASB95

When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom.

Proverbs 16:18 · NASB95

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.

Proverbs 29:23 · NASB95

A man's pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor.

a. Proverbs 11:2

IN MY WORDS

Pride brings dishonor, while wisdom keeps company with the humble.

b. Proverbs 16:18

IN MY WORDS

Pride runs out ahead of destruction; a haughty spirit is the last step before a fall.

c. Proverbs 29:23

IN MY WORDS

Pride brings a person low, and it is humility, not self-promotion, that gains honor.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

God gives grace to the humble; Daniel 4 is that principle with a throne in it.

CRITICAL THINKING

Scripture consistently pairs pride with a fall and humility with honor — the very reversal we least expect. The world's ladder and God's economy run in opposite directions.

KEY QUESTION

Which am I trusting to lift me — self-promotion, or humility?

2 Pride isn't always overt. Sometimes it can be subtle. What are some ways that it's possible for us to be prideful without noticing it?

Romans 12:3 · NASB95

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

IN MY WORDS

Craving credit, resisting correction, comparing ourselves to others, name-dropping, refusing help, or quietly assuming we deserve better than we have received.

CROSS REFERENCE **Galatians 6:3** "if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Pride rarely announces itself as rebellion; it shows up as wanting the credit, the last word, the seat at the center.

CRITICAL THINKING

The most dangerous pride is the kind we cannot feel, because it wears the clothing of standards, discernment, or hurt feelings. What we call "being right" is often just being proud in a respectable disguise.

KEY QUESTION

When was the last time I was corrected — and how did I actually take it?

3 According to James 4:6, how does God react to the proud? To the humble?

James 4:6 · NASB95

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

IN MY WORDS

God actively opposes the proud and pours grace on the humble — pride puts a person in opposition to God Himself.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Peter 5:5** "clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

The same God who resisted Nebuchadnezzar's pride restored him the moment he humbled himself; grace was waiting on the far side of the grass.

CRITICAL THINKING

"Opposed" is a startling word — it means pride does not merely disappoint God, it enlists Him against us. Of all the fights to pick, the proud has chosen the one no one wins.

KEY QUESTION

Is there an area where my pride has effectively set God against me?

4 What perspective does Psalm 121:1–2 encourage us to cultivate?

Psalm 121:1-2 · NASB95

I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

IN MY WORDS

To lift our eyes off ourselves and our circumstances and locate our help in the Lord who made heaven and earth — the very posture Nebuchadnezzar finally took.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:34** "I raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

He looked up, and then his reason returned; the humble life begins with a lifted gaze.

CRITICAL THINKING

Nebuchadnezzar and the psalmist use the same gesture — eyes lifted upward. Humility is not looking down on ourselves; it is looking up to God, and self shrinks to its true size in the comparison.

KEY QUESTION

Where are my eyes fixed by default — on the mountain, on myself, or on the Lord?

5 Many of us are familiar with Proverbs 3:5–6. Typically we think of this passage in terms of dependence upon God, but it's also an exhortation for us to express humility.

Proverbs 3:5-6 · NASB95

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

a. **To what extent does verse 5 tell us to trust God?**

IN MY WORDS

With all our heart — total, not partial, reliance, refusing to lean on our own understanding.

b. **To what extent does verse 6 urge us to acknowledge Him?**

IN MY WORDS

In all our ways — every area of life, not merely the religious ones.

c. In light of what verses 5 and 6 say, do you think there are any exceptions? Why or why not?

> IN MY WORDS
>
> No — the two "all"s leave no corner of life reserved for leaning on ourselves.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 17:7** "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord."

> AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel
>
> Dependence on God is the humility a remnant lives by — trusting who He is rather than what we can manage.

> CRITICAL THINKING
>
> The command's force is in the two "all"s — the moment we carve out one area to lean on ourselves, we have quietly named it our own little kingdom. Full trust is measured at the exceptions we try to keep.

> KEY QUESTION
>
> *What is the one area I still handle as though God's guidance doesn't apply there?*

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6 The Lord Jesus Christ is entirely deserving of our reverence, worship, and obedience. Yet in Philippians 2:5–8, we read of His humility.

> Philippians 2:5-8 · NASB95
>
> *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

a. What are some examples of the cost we may pay for being humble?

> IN MY WORDS
>
> Humility can cost us status, recognition, our own way, and the comfort of self-defense — the same descent Christ chose.

b. What are some benefits we and others can gain when we're willing to be humble?

> IN MY WORDS
>
> It gains reconciled relationships, freedom from the exhausting work of self-promotion, room for God to exalt us in His time, and a witness others cannot argue with.

CROSS REFERENCE **Philippians 2:9** "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him" — the descent came first, then the exaltation.

> JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You
>
> Grace flows to the humble; the proof of a changed heart is not a restored kingdom but a willingness to descend.

CRITICAL THINKING

Christ's humility was not weakness but strength under perfect control — He descended on purpose, knowing the exaltation that followed was God's to give. Real humility can afford to go low because it trusts Who lifts up.

KEY QUESTION

What descent am I avoiding because I am still trying to arrange my own exaltation?

Closing Thoughts · Lesson 4

As we read about Nebuchadnezzar, it would be easy to say, “Why did he keep making the same mistake again and again? I wouldn’t do that.” But with a little thought, most of us can name ways we have grieved God repeatedly. Even the apostle Paul, decades into following Christ, wrote, “I do not understand my own actions... I do the very thing I hate” (Romans 7:15). That describes all of us.

It is for this reason we can be grateful for a patient God. “The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness” (Psalm 103:8). And yet we dare not presume upon that patience — Paul asks whether we think lightly of “the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads... to repentance” (Romans 2:4). The intent of God’s patience is always that we would take corrective action.

Lesson 3 ended with the king blessing “the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego” — real admiration, but not yet surrender. Daniel 4 is where that gap finally closes. The furnace had impressed him; the grass changed him. By the end, the proudest man alive is no longer merely praising the God of other men — he calls Him his own and warns the whole earth that God humbles the proud.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.”

DANIEL 4:37

Most of us will never eat grass in a field. But we will face the quieter humbling — the correction we resent, the credit we crave, the warning we quietly file away for later. The lesson of Daniel 4 is that pride is not broken at the bottom of the fall; it is surrendered before it. Look up now. The God who humbles those who walk in pride is the same God who restores them the moment they do.

STUDY HELPS · CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

The tree, the warning, the fall, and the God who puts down one and exalts another

> *"Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."*
>
> DEUTERONOMY 8:17–18

> *"Behold, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon With beautiful branches and forest shade, And very high, And its top was among the clouds."*
>
> EZEKIEL 31:3

> *"Nathan then said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul."*
>
> 2 SAMUEL 12:7

> *"For not from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the desert comes exaltation; But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another."*
>
> PSALM 75:6–7

> *"And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died."*
>
> ACTS 12:23

> *"He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble."*
>
> LUKE 1:52

> *"But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.""*
>
> JAMES 4:6

> *"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,"*
>
> 1 PETER 5:6

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Deuteronomy 8 is the warning Israel was given before she ever had a palace: when you are full, you will say "my power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth." Nebuchadnezzar said it on his roof; Herod said it on his throne and was struck the same hour (Acts 12). Tsarfati reads Ezekiel's cedar and Daniel's tree together as God's picture of every empire that shelters the world and forgets the Gardener — and Luke 1:52 as Mary singing the sentence over all of them.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Psalm 75 is the doctrine under the chapter: promotion comes neither from the east nor the west; God is the Judge, He puts down one and exalts another. MacArthur ties 2 Samuel 12:7 to Daniel's "it is you, O king," and James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:6 to the king's last sentence — the New Testament commands what Daniel 4 demonstrates. God is opposed to the proud; the only safe posture under His mighty hand is under it.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik lines them up: the warning (Deuteronomy 8), the picture (Ezekiel 31), the confrontation (2 Samuel 12), the principle (Psalm 75), the parallel (Acts 12), the song (Luke 1), and the command (James 4; 1 Peter 5). He notes that Herod is Nebuchadnezzar without the stump — the same boast, no twelve months, no restoration — and that the difference is grace, not merit.

STUDY HELPS · THREE VOICES

At a Glance

Three voices, one chapter

The same chapter, read three ways. Tsarfati listens for the times of the Gentiles and the pride of the nations; MacArthur presses the sovereignty of God and the anatomy of pride; Guzik walks the tree, the watcher, the bricks and the illness. Together they keep Daniel 4 from becoming either a curiosity or a cliché.

THE MOMENT	TSARFATI · the times	MACARTHUR · sovereignty	GUZIK · text & history
The decree (4:1–3)	The head of gold testifies against the times of the Gentiles.	God made him publish it; praise that costs a man his image.	Psalm 107:2 — let the redeemed say so; Daniel's song in the king's mouth.
At ease (4:4–9)	Prosperity is the dangerous season; experts first, prophet last.	God reaches a man through the one thing he cannot control.	The wise men lacked courage more than insight.
The tree (4:10–18)	Verse 17 is why the book exists; the lowliest set over it.	Indispensability is the heart of pride; the stump is the mercy.	Ezekiel's cedar; the watcher an angel; seven years.
Daniel's plea (4:19–27)	The Gospel offered to a Gentile king; the door held open.	Compassion first, clarity second; repentance visible in conduct.	Nathan's "You are the man"; the stump promised before the fall.
The roof (4:28–33)	Babel and Babylon, Isaiah 14 and Revelation 18 in one man.	Answered while the word was in his mouth; the kindest severe thing.	Bricks stamped with his name; boanthropy; the stump held.
Eyes up (4:34–37)	The conversion of the head of gold; surpassing greatness added.	Sanity is knowing who God is; the king was saved.	Spurgeon: He not only exists, but reigns; a good last word.

DANIEL 4 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **A pagan king wrote this chapter.** The only chapter of Scripture authored by a Gentile emperor, as a decree to every nation, opening with praise and telling his own humiliation. God made him publish it. TEXT
- ***Ruler* is the spine of the chapter.** "The Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind" — the watcher (v. 17), Daniel (v. 25), the voice (v. 32), the king (vv. 34–35). Four times, so that the living may know. TEXT
- **The fall was set up by prosperity.** "At ease … flourishing" (v. 4). Deuteronomy 8 warned that the danger comes when you are full. The dream came to the palace, not the battlefield. TSARFATI

- **The stump is grace inside judgment.** Cut down but not uprooted, banded with iron and bronze (v. 15): the kingdom kept for the man while the man was removed from it. Discipline aimed at restoration. MACARTHUR
- **Daniel loved the king and told him the truth.** Appalled for his captor, wishing it on his enemies (v. 19) — then "it is you, O king" (v. 22) and a plea to repent (v. 27). Compassion did not lower the sentence by a word. MACARTHUR
- **The sin was the pronouns.** "I myself have built … my power … my majesty" (v. 30). The bricks really do carry his name; the glory was never his. Answered while the word was in his mouth. GUZIK
- **Restoration began with one act.** "I raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me" (v. 34) — the opposite of looking out over his own works. The beast looked up. GUZIK
- **The head of gold bowed.** Not the God of Daniel, not the God of Shadrach, but "I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven" (v. 37). Many believe this is where he was saved. It is the last we hear of him. TSARFATI

† Questions for the Table

1 **Nebuchadnezzar opens his decree with praise before he tells his humiliation. What has God done for you that you have been reluctant to say out loud — and what image are you protecting by keeping it quiet?**

I will tell what God has done, including the part that cost me my image.

DANIEL 4:1–3

2 **The dream came when the king was "at ease and flourishing." In what area of your life are you most comfortable right now — and is that the area where you have stopped listening?**

Prosperity is where I stop needing God; I will keep my ear open in the easy season.

DANIEL 4:4–5

3 **"That the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind." What throne — at work, at home, in ministry — are you treating as yours rather than as bestowed? What would change if you held it as a loan?**

Everything I rule was given; I will hold it as a steward, not an owner.

DANIEL 4:17, 25

4 **Daniel was appalled for his captor and told him the truth anyway. Who do you need to warn this month — and will you do it with both the compassion of verse 19 and the clarity of verse 22?**

I will love the man enough to tell him the truth, and tell it plainly.

DANIEL 4:19–22, 27

5 **"Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built?" Where are your pronouns wrong — what are you calling "mine" and "by my power" that God built through you?**

I will fix my pronouns before God fixes them for me.

DANIEL 4:30

6 **Restoration began when the king raised his eyes. What are you looking out over right now — your works, your worries — that you need to look up from, and what would it mean to do it today instead of after seven years?**

I will look up now; sanity returns the moment I bless the Most High.

DANIEL 4:34–37

❖

He was at ease in his palace; the tree reached the sky; the watcher came down; the prophet wept and said "it is you"; twelve months passed; the word was in his mouth when heaven answered it. Seven years later a beast raised its eyes to heaven and a king came home — and wrote to the whole earth that the Most High rules.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

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author's faithful summaries — not verbatim quotations — of Amir Tsarfati (*Discovering Daniel*, Behold Israel), John MacArthur (Grace to You) and David Guzik (Enduring Word) on Daniel 4; consult each author's own work for his exact words. Aramaic from the Masoretic Text. · Smith For Christ · The Complete Study: Daniel 4 · Deep Dive + Discovering Daniel Lesson 4.