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NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PRAISE OF GOD | DANIEL 4:1-3

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- Time-line:
  - Daniel goes to exile: 606 BC
  - Nebuchadnezzar's Dream: 604BC
  - Nebuchadnezzar's golden image: 580BC
  - Nebuchadnezzar's second dream: 570 BC
- Verse 1 - While Nebuchadnezzar's actual reign did not cover **all people, nations, and languages**, his influence was certainly great enough that he could speak authoritatively to all **that dwell in all the earth**. This displays the pervasive nature of the gentile empires.
- Verse 2 - Nebuchadnezzar's reference to **the high God** both shows that he recognizes the God of the Jews as higher than the others, and also that he continues to hold to the other gods, in spite of the **wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me**.
- Verse 3 - As in v. 2, notwithstanding the magnificent things Nebuchadnezzar says of our God, these beliefs *do not constitute conversion*. Nebuchadnezzar was neither "Christian" (an anachronism) nor Jew.
- *A note about the Gospel:*
  - A Christian is one who has placed their faith in Jesus Christ. They "believe in their heart" that God has raised Him from the dead and they "confess with their mouth Jesus Christ as Lord."
  - There is not a single reference to this kind of personal faith in the Old Testament.
    - Those who were "of faith" in the Old Testament had a faith in God, even in the coming Messiah and the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies, but they were not "accepting Jesus as their Savior" in a post-resurrection Gospel sense.
    - Furthermore, they could not be required to believe more than had been revealed. Such frankness of comprehension requires a dispensational worldview.
  - In sharing the Gospel today, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is essential to a Gospel presentation.
    - These fundamentals are nowhere found in the book of Daniel.
    - Since the Gospel, therefore, is not in the book of Daniel, we cannot claim that Nebuchadnezzar was saved.
    - We should share the Gospel using passages where it is actually found, not passages where it is assumed.

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NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM OF A TREE | DANIEL 4:4-17

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- Verses 4-6 - Those who contend that Nebuchadnezzar is "saved" must deal with his actions in these verses. He is apparently still relying on all the old pagan methods.
- Verse 8 –
  - **Belteshazzar** - The name most likely means "Bel's Prince." Bel = Baal. *tsha* = "belonging to" and zar = prince / ruler (likely Czar and Caesar are derivatives.)
  - **according to the name of my god** - Here is the biggest proof that Nebuchadnezzar was not "saved."
- Verse 9 –
  - **Master of the magicians** - Since Daniel was not a **magician** in the pagan sense, this word must be considered. The most thorough note comes from *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, which builds the case that the word **magician** means, "guardian of secret things." Daniel, being the one who can reveal "secret things," is thus the master.
  - **the holy gods** - The translation of *gods* is correct (also in 4:8), and is given from Nebuchadnezzar's point of view. The word is used in the same tense 9 times in the book of Daniel, and is always translated **gods** except Dan. 3:25, where *gods* would have been more accurate (see note at Dan. 3:25).

- **tell me the visions** - Since Nebuchadnezzar is going to tell the vision in vv. 10 and following, he is not making the same demand as in chapter 2, where he has forgotten the dream.
- Verse 12 - Literally, "food" or "provisions."
- Verse 13 – a **watcher and an holy one** - The term **watcher** is used of angels, and **holy one** is the same as v. 9 (**holy gods**) except singular. Gramatically this could be two beings or, more likely, "a watcher, even a holy one" (similar in YLT). Since v. 14 uses the singular **He**, the singular being is a better fit.
- Verse 14 – **Hew down...** - A similar vision is given in Ezek. 31:3ff, and should be compared to Matt. 13:31-31. Though the Matt. 13 parable is almost always given a positive interpretation, the Scripture, when it speaks prophetically, speaks poorly of the mighty tree that the **birds of the air** rest upon.
- Verse 16 - The replacement of the "Nebuchadnezzarian reign" to that of a beast-like reign for seven years must be seen as prophetic beyond the particular history of Nebuchadnezzar. Be reminded that the Antichrist is *not* one of the 10 kings represented by the toes of the image of Daniel 2.
- Verse 17 – **the most High ruleth** - God has granted the gentile reign, and will also grant the reign of the Antichrist.

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## DANIEL'S INTERPRETATION | DANIEL 4:18-27

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- Verse 19 –
  - **Daniel was astonished...** - An interesting parallel - The Beast (Antichrist) will replace the Gentile Kingdoms for seven years, then **in one hour** will be made desolate (Rev. 18:10,17,19). Here Daniel is **astonied** (literally "thunder struck" or "stone-faced") for **one hour, and his thoughts troubled him**. Could Daniel have been seeing a vision of the last hour of the future seven-year reign of the beast?
  - **troubled** - Literally, "alarmed" or "dismayed."
- Verse 22 – **It is thou, O King...** -
  - The Jehovah's Witnesses have a theology that says the Kingdom of God was restored to earth in October of 1914, based on this passage. However, these words are the Achilles heel of their argument.
  - The JW argument:
  - God set up a Kingdom to rule the earth. The tree represents that Kingdom.
  - The tree was then cut down by Nebuchadnezzar and the earth was ruled by beasts for 7 years.
  - Seven years is 2,520 days, and the "prophetic rule" (according to JW) of 1 day = 1 year, this is 2,520 years.
  - The invasion of Nebuchadnezzar was October 607BC (according to JW chronology), and 2,520 years later is October, 1914. (<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/daniel-4-bible-chronology-1914/>)
  - Verse 27 - This instruction is incompatible with the Age of Grace, and thus demands dispensationalism.

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## THE DREAM FULFILLED | DANIEL 4:28-37

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- Verse 32 - In one sense, this does not align with the book of Revelation, since the "kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar" is not restored. However, in another sense, it is at the end of the Tribulation that the gentile nations of the earth recognize **that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men**. Furthermore, though the **kingdom of men** never has authority again, they do continue to exist, coming to and fro in the Kingdom (Zech 14:16).
- Verses 34-35 - Once again, this appears to be more of a reference to the gentile people who enter the kingdom of God than a "profession of faith" for Nebuchadnezzar.