

King Neb Goes Crazy

Daniel 4

Based on NLT (2004)

Daniel 4:1-18

The years went by and King Nebuchadnezzar was living in his palace in comfort and prosperity. But one night he had a dream that... terrified him.... All the wise men of Babylon, so they could tell him what his dream meant. ...He told them the dream, but they could not tell him what it meant. At last Daniel came in before him, and the king told him the dream.

“...This is what I dreamed. I saw a large tree in the middle of the earth. The tree grew very tall and strong.... It had fresh green leaves, and it was loaded with fruit for all to eat. Wild animals lived in its shade, and birds nested in its branches. All the world was fed from this tree.

“Then as I lay there dreaming, ...a messenger... from heaven...shouted, ‘Cut down the tree...scatter its fruit! Chase the...animals away. But leave the stump and the roots in the ground... Now let him be drenched with ...dew...and ...for seven years, let him have the mind of a wild animal instead of the mind of a human. *This is happening...* so that everyone may know that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world. He gives them to anyone he chooses—”

The king asked Daniel to tell him the meaning of the dream

Daniel 4:19-27

Daniel replied, “I wish the events in this dream would happen to your enemies, my lord, and not to you! The *tree...*, Your Majesty, is you. For you have grown strong and great; your greatness reaches up to heaven, and your rule to the ends of the earth.

“This is what the dream means, Your Majesty, and what the Most High has declared will happen ... You will be driven from human society, and you will live in the fields with the wild animals. You will eat grass like a cow, and you will be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven years will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses. But the stump and roots of the tree were left in the ground. This means that you will receive your kingdom back again when you have learned that heaven rules.

“King Nebuchadnezzar, please accept my advice. Stop sinning and do what is right. Break from your wicked past and be merciful to the poor. Perhaps then you will continue to prosper.”

Daniel 4:28-33

But all these things did happen to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later he was taking a walk on the flat roof of the royal palace in Babylon. As he looked out across the city, he said, ‘Look at this great city of Babylon! By my own mighty power, I have built this beautiful city as my royal residence to display my majestic splendor.’”

That same hour the judgment *in the dream* was fulfilled, and Nebuchadnezzar was driven from human society. He ate grass like a cow, and he was drenched with the dew of heaven. He lived this way until his hair was as long as eagles’ feathers and his nails were like birds’ claws.

Daniel 4:34-37

After this time had passed,...Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. *His* sanity returned, and *he* praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever. *He*...was restored as head of *the* kingdom, with even greater honor than before. Nebuchadnezzar, *praised* the King of heaven, *saying* “All his acts are just and true, and he is able to humble the proud.”

Story Crafting

Words/phrases to consider:

Dew of Heaven – In Babylonian times, dew was considered to come down from the stars of heaven.

Most High – This term is used in both the Old and New Testaments to refer to God. However, you may need to add the word God in some languages for the listeners to understand who you are talking about.

King of Heaven – In some languages, it may be necessary to say “God, who is the king of heaven.”

Teaching this Story

What did you like about this story?

Was there something in this story that you did not understand?

What did you learn about “man” (human characters in the story)?

What did you learn about God/Jesus in this story?

What do you need to apply to your life from this story?

To encourage the group to enter into a discussion about Daniel’s experiences in the foreign land, you might ask some of the following questions:

1. What type of king was Neb?
2. In spite of what he had seen of Daniel’s God’s power, had he truly believed?
3. What did God want Neb to know?

4. Did Daniel's words cause the king to repent?
5. What did bring the king's repentance?
6. Could Daniel have caused this dream or influenced Neb in the way God did?
7. What did Daniel that demonstrates his faithfulness in his situation?
8. How was God faithful to Daniel?