

The Method in the King's Madness (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] When we get to this chapter in Daniel, Daniel chapter 4, by the way, if you haven't noticed there on your notes, we come to a very intriguing story, actually.

And especially the more you study it, the more you realize, in some ways, how strange it is. And maybe even more strange than you think, or maybe you initially thought, if you're familiar with it. And, of course, we haven't read it yet, so maybe I have to refresh our memory about what this chapter is all about. So I'm going to go ahead and read the entire chapter, even though we're not going to make our way even through half of it, actually.

So let me start with verse 1 of chapter 4. Nebuchadnezzar the king. To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth.

So right off as I start to read, you know there's something different about this chapter. Almost like the beginning of something new, and indeed it is, and I'll explain that a little bit later. He said, he wrote,

[2 : 21] By the way, and the more we read, in fact already what we've read, you know that Nebuchadnezzar, he's a changed man here. So, anyway, I told them the dream, but they did not make known to me its interpretation.

But at last, Daniel came before me. His name is Belshazzar, according to the name of my God. In him is the spirit of the Holy God.

And I told the dream before him, saying, Belshazzar, chief of the magician, because I know that the spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.

These were the visions of my head while on my bed. I was looking, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew and became strong, its height reached to the heavens, and it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.

Its leaves were lovely, its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it. The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

[3 : 40] I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. He cried aloud and said thus, Chop down the tree and cut off its branches.

Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it and the birds from its branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field.

Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from that of a man. Let him be given the heart of a beast, and let seven times pass over him.

And this is going to last for seven years. This decision is by the decree of the watchers and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the most high rules in the kingdom of men gives it to whomever he will and sets over it the lowest of men.

This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy God is in you.

[5 : 06] Then Daniel, whose name was Belshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. So the king spoke and said, Belshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.

Belshazzar answered and said, My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies. The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose

height reached to the heavens, and which could be seen by all the earth, whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home.

It is you, O king, who have grown and become strong, for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth. And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, the holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze and the tender grass of the field.

Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him. This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king.

They shall drive you from men. Your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he chooses.

[6 : 57] And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that heaven rules.

Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you. Break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.

All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of the twelve months, he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. The king spoke, saying, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?

While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven, King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken, the kingdom has departed from you, and they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.

They shall make you eat grass like oxen, and seven times shall pass over you until you know that the most high rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever he chooses.

[8 : 09] That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from men and ate grass like oxen. His body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagle's feathers and his nails like bird's claws.

And at the end of the time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven and my understanding 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 is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. He does according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

No one can restrain his hand or say to him, What have you done? At the same time, my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me.

My counselors and nobles resorted to me. I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the king of heaven, all of whose works are truth and his ways justice, and those who walk in pride, he is able to put down.

[9 : 28] So it's interesting, isn't it? Interesting story. Intriguing story. And, uh, though actually, and this is kind of all by introduction, all right, so we'll get to your notes here pretty soon.

But actually, what we have here, technically speaking, uh, here in Daniel chapter 4 is an official Babylonian document. That's what this is, or really a letter.

An official letter. A royal letter. And, uh, and so it, uh, was a document or a letter that would have been read by really countless thousands of people uh, throughout the kingdom.

Maybe tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of people living in the various, kind of the various areas or regions of the Babylonian empire that was by this time vast.

And, uh, and so kind of, kind of different. Uh, it's not, uh, really not like, uh, anything else that's written, uh, and recorded in, in the Bible. Uh, Daniel, so Daniel chapter 4 contains, or really it is, an official royal communication or letter that would have been published throughout the entire empire.

[10 : 46] And, uh, verse 1, uh, the document's salutation makes that pretty clear. Let me look at it. Nebuchadnezzar, the king, to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied to you.

So, clearly, this is a letter that was meant to be read, uh, by, by, not all, uh, certainly probably not all.

Uh, there would be many illiterate people, I'm sure, within the empire in this day, but it would have been read by them or read to them. Uh, you can picture, uh, because this is the way it worked in this day, uh, that the king would have his heralds and, uh, probably had a whole army of them considering how vast the empire was.

And these heralds would have taken this official letter and, uh, they would have traveled to the, uh, to key points, key cities, uh, uh, throughout the empire.

And, uh, in some cases, they would, and this is the way they would do it, they would go to the center of the, that particular city or village and, uh, you know, you can almost see, have unfurled the, the document or the scroll and, uh, say, hear ye, hear ye.

[12:03] You know, I don't know they actually said that, but, uh, you know, better perk up your ears. I've got something to, to read to you. This is the king speaking to you and, and then would, would read that.

Can you imagine this particular letter? Uh, I mean, now that we know the substance of it, uh, can you imagine that being read, uh, throughout a pagan empire?

Uh, really, really quite amazing. Uh, in fact, uh, I was thinking, you know, the Bible, the New Testament particularly, likens the pastor to the herald.

In fact, a herald is, uh, a good description of what a pastor is. A pastor speaks for the king, the king of kings. And so, he speaks not his words, but the king's words.

And he speaks not with his own authority, but with the authority of the king. And, uh, uh, and here's a, uh, an actual example, uh, of very likely implication is many heralds going out throughout the known world of the day.

[13:11] And, and what are they reading, reading about? They're reading about the one true God. Uh, it's really, really kind of amazing when you think of this. And that's exactly what would have been done.

Uh, it would have been spread throughout the entire empire. It is also somewhat interesting to note, maybe as a, uh, kind of a side note here, that when you think of the Bible as a whole, this really is the only chapter in the Bible that is composed under the authority of a Gentile king.

Now, some would say a pagan king, and, uh, depends on whether or not you believe that in this chapter we have, uh, you know, the account of a true conversion, uh, or whether, you know, uh, he's just simply acknowledging the one true God.

I, I kind of tend to believe that Nebuchadnezzar was converted here, and some of the things that he said, things that he believed, and it's obvious that God had that as a purpose in his life.

So whether it, it is a chapter written by a pagan king, or it's a chapter written just simply by a Gentile king, is the only example of that in the entire, uh, Bible, and, and that's, that's interesting.

[14:26] Uh, all right, so let me make a few more introductory remarks, then we'll get into the, uh, chapter itself. This kind of helps us get the context, the timing, um, you know, in relation to, uh, uh, the Babylonian empire.

This chapter, uh, reveals a dream, of course. We've read about that. Actually, it's Nebuchadnezzar, who's, if not doing the writing here, uh, in fact, some scholars, uh, would even suggest that Daniel actually wrote this for the king, that he would, would, would be the scribe writing this down.

I don't think it was written down by Nebuchadnezzar's hand. He would have somebody to do that for him. And so we learn about this second dream through, from Nebuchadnezzar himself.

Second dream, and, and it also marks Nebuchadnezzar's, actually his third miraculous encounter with Yahweh God.

Third time, that, that, or the first time was with his first dream. And, uh, and so Daniel's able to not only tell him, interpret the dream, but also tell him what the dream was.

[15:40] That's, that was a miraculous encounter and Nebuchadnezzar responded to that, to that in, in a pretty profound way. And then the second time would be the fiery furnace, uh, and the miracle that was done there.

So here's the third time, and this time, God is actually prophesying his judgment of Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar is seeing, seeing that actually happen, and he can't even stop it.

Uh, and, uh, and then, but then also, uh, true to the prophecy, God's word, his kingdom is restored to him for a time as well. So, this is an encounter with, uh, with, uh, Yahweh God.

Also, the events that are revealed in chapter 4, uh, occurred a long time after the events of chapter 3.

We studied chapter 3 already, the fiery furnace, and that whole, whole, uh, story, and, uh, actually now we're 30 years later. Best estimate.

[16:41] Uh, so a whole lot of time has, uh, uh, elapsed here, uh, and no record of anything that happened during that 30 years, but, so we're 30 years later now, and so these events occurred late in Nebuchadnezzar's life.

We do have some extra biblical, uh, historical evidence about how long Nebuchadnezzar lived, how long his reign was, how long the, uh, Babylonian empire, uh, lasted.

Nebuchadnezzar, uh, you know, was a young king, uh, and, uh, when the empire began, and now we're 30 years later, and so it's happening late in his life.

Verse 4, uh, suggests that there was peace throughout the empire at this time. These are just little, little, uh, kind of, uh, tidbits of the context.

There's peace. I mean, he's, it says there in verse 4, I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house. Anytime a king is at rest in his house, it means there's relatively, relative peace in the empire because in those days, the king led his armies.

[17:54] And, uh, and so if he's at home and there's rest in his house and he's flourishing in his palace, as it says in verse 4, then it was a time of peace throughout the empire.

Verse 30 also reveals that his building projects because he was not only a great military leader conquering most of the known world, but he also was a great builder and Babylon is famous, uh, uh, for its architecture and, uh, you know, the hanging gardens and such that you probably have heard about and so forth.

So apparently all that's done as well because verse 30 says, is not this great Babylon? I mean, it, it pictures Nebuchadnezzar kind of, you know, up on the roof of his palace and I think they've said that, uh, he may have had three or four palaces.

This is on the roof high above the city possibly even looking down upon the hanging gardens that famous spot and, and everything is, is, is done and he's looking at his, this great, great Babylon here and, uh, he says, and it says that I have built, I have built, past tense for royal dwelling by my mighty power for the honor of my majesty.

We'll get back to that verse, uh, not tonight but, uh, next time. And then consider verse 29 says that the king's madness began a year after the dreams, 12 months after the dream where God prophesies that the kingdom will be taken away from him temporarily because it will be restored to him.

[19:34] Uh, uh, and so a year after the dream says at the end of 12 months, now his illness lasted seven years.

It's repeated throughout the account that came over him seven times. That's, that means seven years. and the events of this chapter took place no later than the 34th year of Nebuchadnezzar's 43 year reign.

Daniel was now 50 years old. You know, we started the study of the book. Daniel's just a young teenager in his tweens, maybe, not even a teenager.

And now he's 50 years old. So a lot of time has passed in Nebuchadnezzar's nearing the end of his reign. And actually when we get into chapter five, we discover he's actually, we're actually coming to the end of the Babylonian empire.

Because then we have Belteshazzar, not Belteshazzar, Belteshazzar coming next. But we'll get to that when we get to chapter five. All right, so let's look at the chapter. That's enough introduction.

[20:46] And first of all, we want to see the king's published declaration declaration. I've already kind of said a little bit about this. His published declaration.

And this is verses one through three. And so the first three verses of the chapter really we could say comprise an introduction to the letter.

It's an introduction to it. It includes a salutation as all letters do. And it's an introduction, kind of introduces the subject, and then we get into kind of the body of the letter.

So verses one through three is the king's published declaration. First of all, he says something about the people to whom the letter is addressed.

The people, verse one, Nebuchadnezzar, the king, to, you know, this is more than just a standard kind of salutation.

[21 : 47] it gives you a window into Nebuchadnezzar's perspective on his empire, but also it gives us a window into the historical reality of the greatness and vastness of his empire.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king, to all peoples. So as to every living soul, he's writing this letter, all peoples, nations, that would be people groups, small cultures, small groups of people here and there.

You know, the world is made up of a lot of what we call people groups, not really sovereign nations, just groups of people that have some kind of connection together.

But it says not only all peoples, but all nations, and that would include nations that are sovereign, sovereign nations, and languages.

Because the kingdom was so vast, it would have included a number of conquered peoples that had differing languages, and it's the nature of big empires.

[23 : 04] All right, so all peoples, all nations, all languages that dwell in all the earth. All the earth, that sounds, you know, a bit audacious though. You know, all peoples that dwell in all the earth.

All right, so this is a letter I want everybody to read it, every living soul. You know, part of it is because this was the, kind of the mindset of kings in these days, especially kings of empires, you know, the Babylonian empire, you know, later the Assyrian, the Persians, and the Assyrian empires, and later the Roman empire, and, you know, those who were the kings or emperors, they really just had the, you know, maybe overstated idea that they ruled the entire world.

and so part of it is that, and yet, it's not so audacious when you consider that by this time, because we're now, you know, almost to the end of the Babylonian empire, for 30 some odd years, this empire has been growing and spreading over the civilized world, the known world of the day, and by this time, it really had encompassed the entire civilized world.

its reach was vast, and Nebuchadnezzar's rule was far-reaching, but we do understand from his, this salutation, the way he introduces his letter, that he's actually expecting nations that are not even a part of his empire to, to respect this letter and read this letter.

He really does want everyone on the face of the earth to read this. And I would add another thing, it kind of, especially when you, you know, you understand the subject of the letter, and what the letter, what Nebuchadnezzar is saying about the one true God, what God has done for him, and who this God really is.

[25 : 23] I mean, Nebuchadnezzar is the king of the world in a very real sense, and yet he is saying that Yahweh God is king over me. And so when you think about that, Nebuchadnezzar's desire, you know, that all people and nations and languages read this thing, his desire was not, you know, self-centered, it wasn't, you know, this, you know, I'm the great king.

His desire was that his testimony be read by everyone in the world, and that's admirable, I think. Second, the peace he wishes upon those who will read his letter.

He wishes them peace, which is not really typical language of a king in this day, that he would wish peace for everyone.

It says verse 1, latter part of verse 1, peace be multiplied to you. And I just think, you know, the peace that Nebuchadnezzar ultimately found in Yahweh, he didn't have it until near the end of his life.

The peace he ultimately found, he now wished upon all the subjects of his empire, his kingdom. Now, it happened, but I think it's interesting.

[26 : 51] And so, you know, he's writing this letter, and this is how he introduces it. I mean, it's not just standard salutation. There's a lot behind this. And then third, the purpose for which he wrote the letter.

Verse 2, I thought it good, actually, literally, good to me. It was good to me. This was a good thing, to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.

For me, or literally for my good. And, of course, he's referring to the miracles God used to demonstrate his reality to Nebuchadnezzar.

That was the first thing God did, was to reveal his reality. Nebuchadnezzar and the people of Babylon, they worshipped many, many gods.

They were polytheistic. And, at first, I think, in fact, through most of his life, Nebuchadnezzar was willing to add God to that list of gods.

[28 : 04] But, I think, at the end, he understood that the God, Yahweh God, is God. And, and so, he then is declaring these miraculous, these signs and wonders, these miracles that serve to demonstrate to Nebuchadnezzar that God is real, that Yahweh God is real, but also to demonstrate his sovereign power.

And, he certainly did that, the sovereign power of God. I mean, he, revealed things to Nebuchadnezzar, performed signs and wonders that were beyond anything Nebuchadnezzar had ever seen, beyond anything that any of his magicians could ever do, certainly beyond anything that he could verify that his so-called gods have ever done.

and, and, and so, you know, you, you, the dream that he has here, that he relates in his story, that's God revealing, revealing his, his reality and his power, because it's a dream about the future, and the future came true.

The, so the prophecy of his judgment, coming judgment, the grace of restoration, to restore the kingdom back to him, his saving faith, all of that.

Now, he does not detail the previous signs and wonders in the letter. You would almost expect that. Some have thought, well, maybe we don't have the entire letter. So, when he introduced this, you know, verse 2, when he said to declare the signs and wonders, that maybe he did declare all of them, we just have part of the letter.

[29 : 54] I don't, I don't think so. I, you know, his first dream, Daniel's revelation of the dream, and also interpretation of the dream, the fiery furnace episode, all of that. I think that perhaps the people already were well acquainted with those.

They'd already been published abroad. You don't keep things like that secret. And so, all he's relating here in the story are those, or in his letter, are those signs and wonders that God performed in behalf of Nebuchadnezzar to open his eyes and heart to the one true God.

And then fourth, the praise he gives to Yahweh God. He praises him. Now, he's not finished with that. He's going to end the letter with many similar things.

But verse 3, how great are his signs, how mighty his wonders. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

So, the letter, this is the introduction to it, and the letter is going to go ahead and reveal the reason for Nebuchadnezzar's praising the Lord, why he would praise him.

[31 : 11] is going to reveal how Nebuchadnezzar came to this conclusion about Yahweh God, that Yahweh God, the God of the Hebrews, is sovereign God over King Nebuchadnezzar.

He's going to declare that in this letter. I mean, he's king of kings. At one point, he considered himself, and the world certainly, lauded Nebuchadnezzar as king of kings.

And yet, Nebuchadnezzar has come to understand that Yahweh God is the king of kings. He's sovereign over King Nebuchadnezzar.

Yahweh is sovereign over all the gods of Babylon. That Yahweh has the power to take from Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom, his rule, his sanity, his life.

He discovers all of these things. And that Yahweh's kingdom alone is eternal. It's everlasting, everlasting kingdom, a dominion that is from generation to generation.

[32 : 14] So he says quite a lot in the introduction to the letter. Quite a lot in just three verses. And just an introduction. We might even say to some degree it is a summary of some things he's going to say in the body of the letter that he's going to expand upon in the body of the letter and also in his conclusion to the letter.

All right, so the king's published declaration and that's exactly what this is. It says good, seemed right to me, seemed good to me to declare these things. Number two, and we'll end with this tonight, the king's puzzling dream.

after the introduction, Nebuchadnezzar then goes back in time to describe how he came to believe what he declared in the introduction.

All right, so he declared certain things about God in the introduction. Now he's going to go back and tell the story how he came to those conclusions about God. So what happened in his life to bring him to a right belief in Yahweh God?

Well, first there is a word about his dominion. It's kind of, really kind of the groundwork that God allowed to be laid in Nebuchadnezzar's life so that then God could judge him and it would have a profound effect upon him.

[33 : 41] So first there's a word about Nebuchadnezzar's dominion at this time. Verse four says, I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house and flourishing in my palace.

So I guess the short, just put it briefly, everything's great. It's perfect.

Everything's perfect. Kingdom's at peace. All the battles have been fought. All the enemies have been defeated. Nebuchadnezzar's in his palace. No reason to fear invasions of any kind.

Though there will be a, you know, a change in his life later. But no fear of any of those things. The kingdom has been built.

It's all complete. All the great buildings of Babylon were complete, including famous hanging gardens. His palace is the most opulent on the face of the earth.

[34 : 46] His wealth, second to none on the entire planet. So, you know, really, this just kind of, Nebuchadnezzar is saying, you know, I'm just primed and ready for this.

Everything's right for what God wants to do and did do. So that leads then to his dream. His word about his dominion. Everything's great.

And then comes this dream. Verse 5, I saw a dream which made me afraid. The thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

Now, I think I've mentioned this before, but this thing about dreams, you know, I kind of want to ask, why did God reveal these things to Nebuchadnezzar by way of dreams?

Why did he do that? I mean, God could do it anyway. God does speak in many other forms, but why dreams with Nebuchadnezzar?

[35 : 49] Well, it's because the culture of Babylon put so much stock in dreams. They really, many in our day put a lot of stock in dreams and really ought not to because we've got the complete word of God.

But God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar through dreams because he knew that would have the greatest impact on Nebuchadnezzar because they thought a lot about dreams. God knew that Nebuchadnezzar would take a dream very seriously and he did, didn't he?

I mean, think about what happened at his first dream. Actually, think about what happened to a lot of his magicians after they couldn't tell him what the dream was. I mean, he took his very seriously. Not that he believed that, you know, Yahweh God was the one speaking here, but that's how they, they believed how the gods revealed their will through dreams.

All right, but now notice what a dramatic change has taken place here from verse, verse 4 to verse 5. Dramatic change, you know, from the way he's feeling in verse 4.

[36 : 54] He's at rest and flourishing, he's prospering and now afraid and troubled. What a marked change. And so that leads then to the next thing, his decree.

His decree, verse 6, therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream.

All right, so he's bringing all these guys back in. He's done this before, probably done this many, many times. Not necessarily just because of dreams, but other things. They were, these guys were his counselors.

You know, they claimed to have certain powers, certain knowledge, and this is just the way it worked. They had certain connections with the gods and, you know, they could, and I'm sure, you know, many of them were, kind of got together and they figured out things that maybe the king would want to hear.

You know, some of the dishonest that was involved in some of these magicians and sorcerers and soothsayers and so forth. So, brings them all in. What's the meaning of this dream?

[38 : 09] Now, he has mellowed out a little bit over the years, right? At least he told them the dream or was going to. Well, he did tell them. And, at least he didn't have them, what did he have?

Burned all their property, he, I forgot now the process that they went through. Yeah, they killed them and destroyed their property, burned their houses down, all that.

He didn't, there was no threat of that here. At least, he didn't put it in the letter. Okay, maybe, I don't know. All right, so, his decree. Then that leads to his disappointment.

Verse 7, then the magicians, the astrologer, astrologers, the Chaldeans and the soothsayers came in and I told them the dream but they did not make known to me its interpretation.

So, he's disappointed. He's got to know the meaning of this dream. It's, it's a bizarre dream. I read it, I'm not going to read the contents of the dream again but it's really bizarre, isn't it?

[39 : 19] And I guess, you know, if we had had a dream because he's relating the dream in word. Can you imagine the visuals of this dream? You know, if I had a dream like this, I'd be quite troubled too.

But, so the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, the soothsayers, they can't tell it. Either they can't or they won't. It's not because they are able really to interpret dreams but they remember the last one.

It was foreboding and it spelled doom. At least they found that out later when Daniel was able to interpret it for them. You know, Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is going to come to an end.

He's the gold head but it's going to be replaced by something else and so, so they've got to be thinking that this dream also may be about the king and, you know, just some of the elements of it kind of maybe lead them to understand that there's doom in this, in the fulfillment of this dream and so maybe they just don't want to be the voice there.

So then finally Daniel, his Daniel, that's E, his Daniel and I put it that way because he was very special. Daniel was very special to Nebuchadnezzar.

[40 : 34] He was his right-hand man and had been from nearly the beginning of his empire, his reign, brought Daniel in as a very young man and God used, of course, to interpret the dream and so he gave him a high place of authority, his authority over all of the, all of his counselors.

He was the head of his counselors. Really, I think, was his right-hand man. So he brings in his Daniel or actually Daniel comes in, verse 8, but at last Daniel came before him.

Begs the question, why, why the delay? I mean, he is one of the king's counselors. He's not an astrologer, you know, not a magician, but he is one of his counselors, his chief counselor.

And so why did he come in last? You know, I have this idea that maybe Daniel thought, well, we'll let these other guys go first and I know they won't be able to do anything and just yet again I'll prove to the king that these fellows are full of hooey and the gods that they're trusting are not true gods.

And so, let them go first. You know, I know they can't answer and then I'll come in. And so at last Daniel came before him. His name is Belshazzar, according to the name of my god.

[42 : 00] This is, again, Nebuchadnezzar speaking. It was a pagan name that he gave all of the young Hebrew boys. In him is the spirit of the holy God.

I don't know, some of you might have the Bibles, I don't know what translation you've got there. King James, really all other translations other than the new King James, at least all those that I looked at, have this spirit of the holy God.

They have, first of all, spirit with a small s. and then the holy God, those are small h, small g, and God is plural, gods.

So, spirit of the holy gods or spirit of the gods, sometimes he said. And, there's a problem in the interpretation.

It's difficult to know which it is. And so is Nebuchadnezzar, you know, still giving some credence to the gods or, and so it depends on the manuscript you look at whether God is plural or singular.

[43 : 06] And if it's singular, as the New King James translators believe it to be, then it's not gods, as in little g, gods, but the God.

The God. And I, I think I'll go with that one. Basically, because of the context, because of what has happened to Nebuchadnezzar, he's not going to be giving credence to gods.

So, Daniel, you know, he's not just simply inhabited by the spirit of all the gods. That doesn't fit with what Nebuchadnezzar says in the letter, especially in the conclusion of it.

All right, so anyway, and I told the dream before him saying, and so he told him the dream. And so, with this we learn, I think, several things about Daniel.

First of all, we have Daniel's impeccable reputation. His impeccable reputation. Verse 9, Belshazzar, chief of the magicians, this is what Nebuchadnezzar says to him, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy God is in you, and no secret troubles, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen in its interpretation.

[44 : 24] So, Nebuchadnezzar is absolutely sure that Daniel has the spirit of the one true God, the highest of gods, dwelling in him and empowering him, and he has this reputation.

In fact, it's not just with Nebuchadnezzar, but the entire empire knows about Daniel, and what his God has done in his life and the power that his God has expressed through him.

So, it's his reputation. And then Nebuchadnezzar relates the details of the dream. We're not going to go back over it again. It doesn't do a whole lot of good to try to interpret various aspects of the

dream because they're meant to be weird.

The dream itself, you can't interpret the dream unless God gives you the interpretation. So, if we could analyze every aspect of the dream and say, well, it's just clear this stands for that and this for that and this for that and so forth, then we could have interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Nobody could do it but Daniel because God gave him the revelation. He gave him the spiritual insight into it. So, I'm not going to go back over the dream again. Then that leads to Daniel's initial reluctance which seems a little strange.

[45 : 50] Verse 19, then Daniel, whose name was Belchashar and that's repeated over and over again, was astonished for a time and his thoughts troubled him.

So, the king spoke and said, Belchashar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you. Now, the word astonished here means actually that Daniel was terrified, horrified and he was horrified, of course, because he understood the meaning of the dream and I don't think he's afraid or perplexed about what he ought to do.

In fact, I think there is at least one translation uses the word perplexed. I don't think it's Daniel not knowing what should I do. It's just horrified about the outcome of this dream and why would that be? Well, it could be that he was concerned about what this might mean for the Hebrew people, the people of Israel. I mean, if Nebuchadnezzar is out of the picture, then will they be treated well because he'd been treating the Israelites pretty well.

It could be he was just, you know, this is terrible. What's going to happen to us because of this? But I don't think that's it. I think more likely because he genuinely loved Nebuchadnezzar and he didn't want to see this happen to him.

[47 : 26] Would you? I mean, we don't want to see this happen. I mean, just think about the dream and Daniel knows what's going to happen and Nebuchadnezzar, his good friend, benefactor, he loved him like a father, I think.

He's going to turn into an animal, go absolutely insane. And I just, I think this broke his heart. In fact, verse 19 says, my Lord, may the dream concern those who hate you and its interpretation concern your enemies.

That is, I wish this could be about your enemies. You know, actually say, I could wish this on your enemies, not on you. So I think that's why the reluctance to tell him about.

And then third, Daniel's inspired revelation, and then we have, of course, him interpreting the dream, and we've read that already. I'm not going to read it again. And then we have Daniel's impassioned request, and I love this, verse 27.

Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you. Break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.

[48 : 55] Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity. Notice he didn't say, perhaps God will repent and this won't happen to you. He knows it's going to happen.

What's he doing? He's pleading with the king, get right with God. He knows what's going to happen. He understands the dream, knows what God's going to do.

He knows why. It's because of Nebuchadnezzar's pride and his sinfulness. And so what's the most natural thing for a man of God to say to a sinner like Nebuchadnezzar?

Stop your sin and live righteously. You know, stop your iniquities and perhaps God will have mercy. So there you have king's public declaration and his puzzling dream. And then next time we'll get to the king's prideful demeanor.