



**FAITH, FREEDOM, & FITNESS**

## **DAILY BREAD**

**Friday, May 22  
Daniel 4:9-18**

*I said, "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians,  
I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you,  
and no mystery is too difficult for you.  
Here is my dream; interpret it for me.*

*These are the visions I saw while lying in bed:  
I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land.  
Its height was enormous.*



*The tree grew large and strong, and its top touched the sky;  
it was visible to the ends of the earth.*

*Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all.  
Under it the wild animals found shelter,  
and the birds lived in its branches;  
from it every creature was fed.*

*“In the visions I saw while lying in bed, I looked,  
and there before me was a holy one, a messenger,  
coming down from heaven.*

*He called in a loud voice:  
‘Cut down the tree and trim off its branches;  
strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.  
Let the animals flee from under it  
and the birds from its branches.*

*But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze,  
remain in the ground, in the grass of the field.  
“Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with  
the animals among the plants of the earth.*

*Let his mind be changed from that of a man  
and let him be given the mind of an animal,  
till seven times pass by for him.*

*“The decision is announced by messengers,  
the holy ones declare the verdict,  
so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all  
kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over  
them the lowliest of people.’*



***“This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had.  
Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means,  
for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me.  
But you can,  
because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”***

While Nebuchadnezzar’s reference to “the holy gods” shows confidence in Daniel, it also shows that he was still polytheistic, believing in and worshipping multiple deities. He has already respected the power of Daniel’s God but did not see the Lord as the One and Only.

The king’s dream depicted an enormous tree. He was familiar with Lebanon, the home of infamously massive trees with wide branches and cones the size of a person’s head. The cedar of Lebanon has been called the “king of trees,” in comparison with other trees found in Bible lands. This sense of dominance will connect to the dream’s meaning, explained later by Daniel.

The tree is described as incredibly influential and important. The tree is not simply seen, it is *known* and *revered*. This also factors into the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, which implies the king will be humbled.



**Nebuchadnezzar had increased significantly in terms of the size of his kingdom and its strength. Everyone in the known world at the time could see the greatness of the Babylonian empire. But would it last much longer? The king's absolute power will not last forever. Someday all kingdoms of the world, including the most powerful, will surrender their rule to King Jesus.**

**Babylon was a beautiful city, as were the leaves of the tree Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. The king had undertaken many projects to enrich his capital and was regarded as a benefactor by countless thousands of people in his realm. These attributes will also reflect the meaning of this dream, as explained later by Daniel.**



**King Nebuchadnezzar makes an important shift in his description of his dream: while the tree was a renowned and valuable resource, providing shade and food for all, it was to be cut down and all its beautiful leaves, branches, and fruit were to be scattered. Here, the angelic messenger starts speaking of the tree as “it,” then transitions to speaking of “he” and “him.” This relates to the idea that the tree symbolizes Nebuchadnezzar himself.**

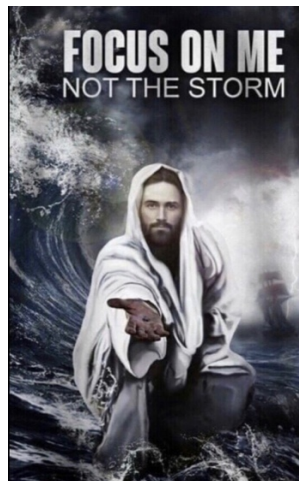
Although the tree is cut down, the stump is to be left intact. This is an important detail, as the stump and its roots retain the potential to grow in the future.

Further, the symbolism is made clearer by indicating that the person in question would be driven insane and would be confined to that state for seven “periods” of time. This part of the dream must have been extremely terrifying for Nebuchadnezzar as he presumably suspected the meaning was very personal.

The angelic decree ends by stating the purpose of the humiliating events that would happen to Nebuchadnezzar. The purpose of these events is to teach him humility before God. Compared to the Lord God, any ruler is just a lowly, limited human being. Nebuchadnezzar had considered himself a deity with vast authority over a vast empire. The Lord planned to teach the king that God is the Supreme Ruler of everything in heaven and on earth.

After recalling his frightening dream, Nebuchadnezzar turns to Daniel for an interpretation ...

*In Christ, Spero*



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