

## BIBLE CHARACTERS

by

D. L. Moody

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### CHAPTER 4

#### NEBUCHADNEZZARS SECOND DREAM

**"I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me" (Daniel 4:5)**

By And By Nebuchadnezzar had another dream. Surely this man will be brought to see GOD's hand at last. How many signs and wonders has he seen, fitted to convince him of GOD's mighty power! This time he remembers the particulars of the dream well enough: they stand out vivid and clear to his mind. Again he calls in the four classes of men on whom he counts to make dark things light, and hidden things plain; and he recounts to them the incidents of this dream. But the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers, are all at fault: they cannot tell him the interpretation. When called upon to interpret his former dream they all stood silent. And they stood silent again as the second dream is unfolded to them. There was something in these dreams of the king which stopped their mouths - usually so ready with some plausible interpretation. With these royal dreams it was no use: they were beaten.

It would appear that Nebuchadnezzar had half-forgotten the man who had recounted to him his former dream, and given its interpretation. He says, **At last Daniel came before me.** And he proceeds to address Daniel by his Chaldean name of Belteshazzar. **O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof. Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong; and the height thereof reached unto Heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: the leaves thereof were fair and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the Heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed; and behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from Heaven: he cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of Heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in**

**the grass of the earth: let his heart be changed from mans, and let a beasts heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able: for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.**

As soon as the prophet appears upon the scene the king feels sure that he will now get the meaning of the dream.

For a time Daniel stands still and motionless. Does his heart fail him? The record simply says **he was astonished for one hour; and his thoughts troubled him.** He saw what was meant by the royal dream - that the king was to have a terrible fall; and that the kingdom was, at least for a season, to be taken from this proud monarch. The ready words rush to his lips; but he hates to let them out. He does not want to tell Nebuchadnezzar that his kingdom and his mind are both about to depart from him; and that he is to wander forth to eat grass like a beast. The king, too, hesitates: a dark foreboding for a time gets the better of his curiosity. But soon he nerves himself to hear the worst; and in kindly words desires Daniel to proceed, to tell out all he knows. And Daniel breaks the silence. He does not smooth over the matter; but speaks out plainly. There and then he preached righteousness to the king. A very good sermon it was too that he preached. If we had more of the same sort now it would be the better for us. He entreats the king to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor: if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility.

Perhaps he told him, for his encouragement, how the King of Nineveh, more than two centuries before, had repented at the preaching of Jonah. He unfolds the full meaning of the dream. He tells the king that the great and strong tree symbolizes Nebuchadnezzar himself; and that just as the tree was hewn down and destroyed, so will he himself be shorn of power and robbed of strength. Daniel tells him that he will be driven from among men, and have to herd with the beasts of the field: yet that nevertheless the kingdom should in the end revert to him, just as the great watcher had spared the stump of the tree.

Repentance might have deferred, or even averted, the threatened calamity. But at that time he repented not. And twelve months afterwards the king heedless of the prophetic warning, and lifted up with pride, walked either through the corridors of his great palace, or out upon its roof; looked forth upon the city's vast extent; gazed at those hanging gardens which counted as one of the wonders of the world; and said: **Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?**

A voice from Heaven instantly cried, **The kingdom is departed from thee.** And then and there GOD touched his reason: it reeled and tottered on its throne, and fled. He was driven forth from men; he herded with animals; his body was wet with the dew of Heaven. This greatest of princes had gone clean mad. It would not take me fifteen minutes today to prove that the world has gone clean mad; and the mass of professing Christians too. Do not men think and talk as everything were done by their own power? Is not GOD completely forgotten? Do not men neglect every

warning that He in mercy sends? Yes, men are mad, and nothing short of it.

### **NEBUCHADNEZZAR S REPENTANCE.**

But Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom had not passed away from him irrevocably; for, according to the prophets word, at the close of the seven times his understanding returned to him; he resumed his throne and his authority; and his counselors and officers again gathered around him. His power has been given back to him; and he is now a very different man. Of a truth the king's reason has returned to him; and he is possessed of a very different spirit. He sends forth a new proclamation giving honor to the Most High, and extolling the GOD of Heaven. Its closing words show his repentance, and tend to prove that Daniel had brought this mighty king to GOD.

It is interesting to go over the different proclamations of Nebuchadnezzar, and note the change that takes place in them. He sent out one proclamation setting forth what other people ought to do, and how they should serve the GOD of these Hebrews. But the truth did not get home to himself until now. Here is his closing proclamation: **At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto Heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me; and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. At the same time my reason returned unto me: and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me; and my counselors, and my lords sought unto me: and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase.**

When you find that a man has got to praising GOD it is a good sign. The earlier edict said much about other peoples duty towards the GOD of the Hebrews, but nothing about what the king himself should do. Oh, let us get to personal love, personal praise! That is what is wanted in the church in the present day. Nebuchadnezzar passes from the stage: this is the last record we have of him. But we may surely hope that, like that of the Corinthians, his was a repentance to salvation not to be repented of. And if this were so we may well believe that today Nebuchadnezzar the king and Daniel the captive are walking the crystal pavement of Heaven arm-in-arm together; and, it may be, talking over the old times in Babylon. Now, if the young prophet had been of a vacillating character; if he had been of a willowy growth, liable to be shaken by every wind, and had not stood there in that city like a great oak - do you think he would have won this mighty monarch to his religion and his GOD? As a result of that young man going to that heathen city and standing firm for his GOD, and the GOD of the Bible, the Lord honored him, and gave him that mighty monarch as a star in his crown. We may fairly say that King Nebuchadnezzar was led to the GOD of the Hebrews through the faith of this Hebrews love - just because he had

a purpose firm,  
And dared to make it known.

### **THE MASTERS SERVICE.**

Service of JESUS! Oh, service of sweetness!

There are no bonds in that service for me;  
Full of delight and most perfect completeness:  
Evermore His, yet so joyously free!

Service of JESUS! Oh, service of power!  
Sharing His glory, while sharing His shame!  
All the best blessings the Master can shower  
Rest on the servant exalting His name.

Service of JESUS! Oh, service joy-giving!  
Melting our hearts into rivers of love;  
Secret of life and the sweetness of living,  
Joy felt on earth that will fill us above.

Service of JESUS! Oh, service of praising!  
Such as redeemed ones rejoicing can sing,  
Daily and hourly their voices upraising,  
Lauding their Savior, extolling their King.

*Eva Travers Poole.*

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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