

Today we deal with 'the mother' of all false gods...**the god of SELF**. Daniel 4 tells us one of the most intriguing illustrations of what it looks like when the God of heaven confronts the god of self, as seen in the life of the powerful Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar.



NEBUCHADNEZZAR (Nēb ū kād nēz' zār) essentially means "**Nabu protects**" [the god of wisdom & writing¹]

- Nebuchadnezzar served as a general under his father
- brilliant military strategist
- Later reigned as king of Babylon for 43 years (605–562 B.C.).²
- Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem 2 different times (597 & 586 B.C.)

The prophet **Jeremiah** (chapter 39) wrote about the 2nd besiegement of 586 which lasted 18 months & resulted in the taking of the city, destroying Solomon's temple, and deporting many of the Hebrews to Babylon.³

- The story also includes King Nebuchadnezzar seizing the fleeing king of Judah and forcing him to watch as his sons were brutally killed. Afterwards Nebuchadnezzar ordered the king of Judah's eyes gouged out, so the last thing he ever saw... was the death of his sons.
- **Nebuchadnezzar is probably best known** as the king who forced people to bow to a 90 foot statue of HIM-SELF as seen in Dan. 3 when Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego refused and were thrown into the furnace, yet emerged unharmed.



Nebuchadnezzar was so amazed that he promoted them & issued this warning:

Daniel 3:29 (NET)

²⁹ I hereby decree that any people, nation, or language group that blasphemes the god of Shadrach, Meshach, or Abednego will be dismembered and his home reduced to rubble! For **there exists no other god who can deliver in this way.**"

¹ <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/nabu/>

² Chad Brand, Charles Draper, et al., eds., "Nebuchadnezzar," Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1180.

³ Ronald H. Sack, "Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadrezzar," ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck, Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 953.

Check out the **REVERSE CHRONOLOGY** (start w/ end of story & back up to show how you got there)

Daniel 4:1-3 NET

¹ “King Nebuchadnezzar, to all peoples, nations, and language groups that live in all the land: Peace and prosperity! ² I am delighted to tell you about the signs and wonders that **the most high God** has done for me. ³ “How great are his signs! How mighty are his wonders! His kingdom will last forever, and his authority continues from one generation to the next.”

So how did this happen? How could the powerful pagan king of Babylon turn from worshipping the god of self to thanking the most high God. Nebuchadnezzar tells us story himself.

- Nebuchadnezzar had a dream (vv.10-17) and wanted to know what it meant. None of his wise advisors could tell him, except for Daniel - who had become well known for the great wisdom he attributed to his God - Yahweh (vv.4-9).
- Dream: a large tree w/ lots of leaves & fruit in which animals took refuge under & ate from.
- A messenger from heaven called for the tree to be chopped down, which caused the animals to scatter away.
- The root of the tree was left in the ground where it gets damp from the dew and is surrounded by grass and animals.

The tree that was toppled is actually a metaphor for a man who has been dethroned and humiliated, a man who acts like an animal for a long period of time.

Here is Daniel's interpretation of the King's dream.

Daniel 4:25-26 (NET)

²⁵ You will be driven from human society, and you will live with the wild animals. You will be fed grass like oxen, and you will become damp with the dew of the sky. Seven periods of time will pass by for you, before you understand that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms and gives them to whomever he wishes. ²⁶ They said to leave the taproot of the tree, for your kingdom will be restored to you when you come to understand that heaven rules.



Like Nebuchadnezzar, you might THINK you're in charge of your life - you're the reason you are healthy, wealthy, & wise, but YOU aren't as awesome as you think you are.

Daniel's pleas for Nebuchadnezzar to turn from his sinful pride treat people with mercy & the impact of this dream didn't concern Nebuchadnezzar for long.

Daniel 4:29-31 (NET)

²⁹ After twelve months, he happened to be walking around on the battlements of the royal palace of Babylon. ³⁰ The king uttered these words: “Is this not the great Babylon that I have built for a royal residence by my own mighty strength and for my majestic honor?”

³¹ While these words were still on the king's lips, a voice came down from heaven: “It is hereby announced to you, King Nebuchadnezzar, that your kingdom has been removed from you!

And just as the dream foretold, Nebuchadnezzar goes insane. The king acts like an animal instead of a man, is driven away from the kingdom, and eats grass like oxen. He grew long hair all over his body and nails like bird claws (v.33)



After 7 years of this craziness, Nebuchadnezzar can tell his story.

Daniel 4:34–37 (NET)

³⁴ But at the end of the appointed time I, Nebuchadnezzar, **looked up toward heaven**, and my sanity returned to me. I extolled the Most High, and I praised and glorified the one who lives forever. For **his authority is an everlasting authority**, and his kingdom extends from one generation to the next. ³⁵ All the inhabitants of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he wishes with the army of heaven and with those who inhabit the earth. No one slaps his hand and says to him, 'What have you done?' ³⁶ At that time my sanity returned to me. I was restored to the honor of my kingdom, and my splendor returned to me. My ministers and my nobles were seeking me out, and I was reinstated over my kingdom. I became even greater than before. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, **praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven**, for all his deeds are right and his ways are just. **He is able to bring down those who live in pride.**

And so it is that **Nebuchadnezzar goes from being the ultimate self-worshiper to worshipping the one true God.** And what he learned is what we must learn, that...

BIG TRUTH: There is a God...and you're NOT Him.

What does God need to use to get OUR attention?

1. **Don't take credit for the victories God has given.** Thank Him!

🔥 1 Chronicles 21 - **King David** bowed to **the god of self.**

2. **Don't take God's gifts for granted.** (salvation, health, provision, family & friends)

3. **Please God first.**

This is more than a ONE TIME DECISION - it's a daily decision to become disciplined - to please God first. It's recognizing, that Jesus DIED for our sin and refusing to live for the junk Jesus died to pay for any more.

REMOVE the false gods of pleasure, love, money, power, & self and REPLACE them with the ONE TRUE GOD in who we find our purpose, worth - the ONE worthy of our worship!

If you need help in that journey...**we're right here!** You have several options.

1. Tell a Christian friend, **"I need to talk"**.
2. **Fill out a connection card, go to our Church App** (open & input our zip - **32340** OR **send text/call** our pastoral staff **Jackie** 673-1582 • **TJ** (423) 991-2793 • **James** 673-1314



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These open-ended questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your Family, Friends, or Small Group.

1. **Have someone read through Daniel 4.** What impacted you the most from today's Biblical text & teaching? Explain your answer.
2. What do you think God wants to DO with what you learned in this series?
3. Life transformation doesn't happen overnight. What kind of campaign will it take for you to REMOVE your false god/s & REPLACE with the One True God?
 - Shannon (gods of love) met for 3 years with a loving counselor to deal w/ her false god.
 - Chuck Colson (gods of power) spent several months in jail reassessing his life.
 - And sadly, after some positive change it has come to our attention, Sunday afternoon that Donny (god of self) the man in today's video, just plead no contest to sexual allegations including minors.⁴ **Read Gen. 4:7** - a warning given to Cain just before he murdered his brother. What danger should we take from this ancient & contemporary story?
4. If someone approached you and communicated he/she wanted to follow Jesus & put Him first on their priority list, what are some practical helps you would give them?

* Share your prayer needs and **PRAY to the FATHER together!**

⁴ http://www.appeal-democrat.com/news/pauling-pleads-no-contest-in-sex-cases-faces-years-in/article_12d3bf24-739a-11e5-a26c-7796c351af41.html