

Daniel 4:10-18 - The Dream Described

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COURSE COMMENTARY



4:10-12 - A Sheltering Tree

- **Trees as Symbols**

Trees frequently appear as symbols within Scripture.

The godly are compared to flourishing, fruitful trees (Ps. 1:3; Ps. 52:8; 92:13; Pr. 11:28; Hos. 14:5-7).

The power of the wicked is said to spread itself like a tree (Ps. 37:35).

- **Tree Represents Babylon**

Nations represented as trees (Eze. 17:1-24; 31:2-14).

Spreading/extent denotes influence.

Branches provide shelter (shadow) for “animals” (surrounding peoples).

- **Height Reached Heavens**

Height represents power and strength (Amos 2:9).

Branches also provide sustenance for animals (surrounding peoples): “in it was food for all.”

Similar in function to the Tree of Life in the eternal state (Rev. 22:2).

Phrases allude to the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:4) and the aspirations of Satan (Isa. 14:14).

4:13-14 - A Watcher Proclaims

- **A Wakeful Sentinel**

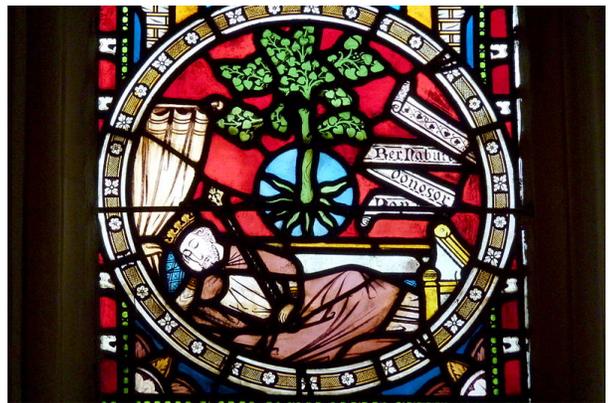
The term for watcher עֵיר [עֵיר] emphasizes wakefulness in order to effectively guard or protect.

Without need of sleep, as the angels (Rev. 4:8).

In this aspect, the watcher has abilities similar to God (Ps. 121:4).

An order of angelic being.

Nebuchadnezzar Dreams



Stained glass window in St. Quintinus Cathedral in Hasselt (Belgium), Presentation: Dream of Nabu-kudurri-usur II. Image courtesy of Reinhardhauke, 18 October 2012. This image is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).

- **Chop Down the Tree**

“Chop down” is a second-person imperative verb: *You! Chop [it] down!*

Who is the command issued to?

Nobody in particular, an impersonal use of verb: *the tree shall be cut down.*

Forcefully declaring God’s will: what is certain to come to pass.

“ They shall... drive you from men... make you eat grass... wet you with dew ” (Dan. 4:25-26, 32).

- **Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon Judged!**

God judges the tree because it failed to bear good fruit (Mat. 3:10; 7:17-20; 21:19-20; Luke 3:9; 13:7-9).

The tree represents Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:22) and, by extension, the kingdom of Babylon he ruled.

4:15-16 - The Heart of a Beast

- **Leave the Stump and Roots**

May denote preservation of the taproot (NET).

A promise of restoration rather than complete destruction.

- **Bound with Iron and Bronze**

Is the binding to be understood as applying to the *tree* or whom it represents:
Nebuchadnezzar?

Preservation of stump from cracking or rot?

Save stump from being plowed or dug up?

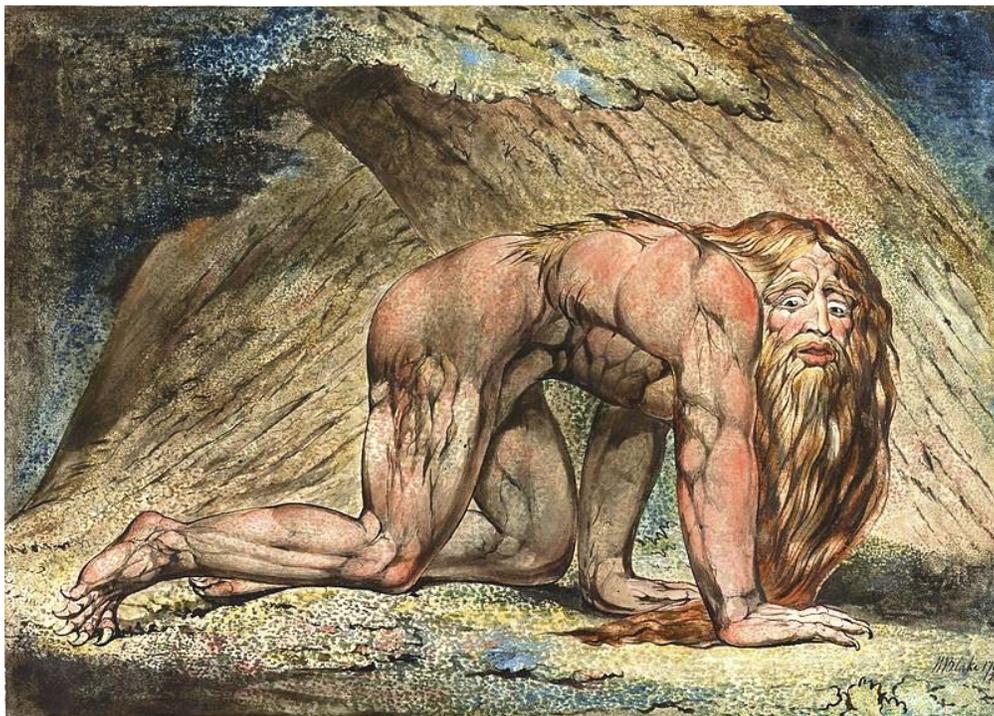
Restrain
Nebuchadnezzar?

- **Wet with Dew of Heaven**

Ongoing preservation of taproot?

Nebuchadnezzar’s insensitivity during his malady (cf. Dan. 5:21).

Nebuchadnezzar, the Beast



Color monotype in tempera, finished with pen, black ink and watercolor on paper by William Blake, 1795. Image courtesy of The Minneapolis Institute of Art. Image is in the public domain.

- [Graze with the Beasts](#)

Nebuchadnezzar's place of residence and behavior will be like the beasts.

He will live like an animal.

Irony: Nebuchadnezzar was given domain over the beasts (Dan. [2:38](#)), now he would become as they.

Through this affliction, God intends to reveal: [\(1\)](#) to *Nebuchadnezzar*, the true nature of his prideful inner self; and [\(2\)](#) to *the world*, the beastly character of the godless dominions Babylon typifies. See [Image of God or Beast?](#)

- [Nebuchadnezzar's Condition](#)

[Monomania](#) - deranged in one significant area only.

[Insania Zoanthropica](#) - regard self as an animal.

[Boanthropy](#) - believe and act as a bovine, a grazing animal.

See [Foreshadowing the Great Tribulation](#).

- [Seven Times](#)

How long would Nebuchadnezzar be mad? Probably seven years : [\(1\)](#) length of periods described as "times" elsewhere in Scripture (Dan. [9:27](#); Rev. [11:2](#); [12:14](#); [13:5](#)); [\(2\)](#) times are said to "pass over" which imply an annual calendrical cycle based on the heavens; [\(3\)](#) enhances typological fit between period of Nebuchadnezzar's madness and the global madness under Antichrist during the Tribulation; [\(4\)](#) ample time for development of Nebuchadnezzar's unkempt hair and nails; [\(5\)](#) the OG indicates the time period (twice) as being ἑπτα ἔπτά [etē hepta] (years seven).

4:17-18 - Decree of the Watchers

- [By the Word of the Holy Ones.](#)

As servants of God's will, the watchers declare and enforce the decree, but are not its ultimate source (1K. [22:19-23](#); Isa. [44:26](#)).

The decree announced by the watchers is later said to be *the decree of the Most High* (Dan. [4:24](#)).

- [The Most High Rules](#)

God is sovereign over the affairs of kings and nations (2K. [19:28](#); Ezra [6:22](#); [7:27](#); Job [12:23](#); Isa. [37:29](#); Eze. [38:4](#), [10](#); Dan. [2:21](#), [37](#); [4:31-32](#); [5:21](#); Rev. [17:17](#)).

Power to rule is derived from--granted by--God (Pr. [8:15-16](#)).

- [To Whomever He Will](#)

Exaltation comes from God (Ps. [75:6-7](#)).

Like many rulers who don't know God, Nebuchadnezzar believed *his own* effort and talent had brought his success.

The word translated "lowest" means "humblest."

God elevates the meek and humble (Luke [1:52](#); 1Cor. [1:27](#)): Joseph (Gen. [41:41-44](#)), Mordecai (Est. [10:3](#)), David (1S. [16:11](#); 2S. [7:8](#); 1Chr. [17:7](#); Ps. [78:70](#)), Daniel and his friends, and believers in Christ (Rom. [8:17](#); Rev. [2:26-27](#)).

Even Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, was of humble origin.