

Daniel 4:19b-23

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Daniel begins interpreting the king's dream.

King Nebuchadnezzar had another dream that disturbed him and that his wise men were unable to interpret. So he called on Daniel. Daniel was hesitant to interpret the dream seeing that it was bad news for the king. King Nebuchadnezzar has assured Daniel that even if his interpretation of the dream is bad news, he wants to hear it, and now Daniel begins explaining the meaning.

Beltshazzar (Daniel) replied, 'My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries!' It seems that Daniel had sympathy for the king and was sorry to tell him the bad news. The tree that the king saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged represented the king. He had become great and had grown strong. His kingdom was large and powerful, providing for all in his domain with food and wealth. His majesty had become great and reached to the sky and his dominion to the end of the earth. The good news of the power and glory of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom came first. But bad news follows.

The king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven decreeing by order of the Most High what would happen to that the mighty tree, representing Nebuchadnezzar and his mighty rule. The angel said, "Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him." Before Daniel goes into the details of the meaning of this declaration, it must have been apparent to the king that something very bad would happen to him and his rule.

Biblical Text:

^{19b} **Belteshazzar replied, 'My lord, *if only* the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries! ²⁰ The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth ²¹ and whose foliage *was* beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which *was* food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged— ²² it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth. ²³ In that the king saw an *angelic* watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, "Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze *around it* in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him,"**