

## THE KING WHO THOUGHT HE WAS A COW!

Presented by

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The Bible contains many interesting historical accounts about people, as well as a lot of intriguing science. And, on rare occasions, the two are even combined. One fascinating example of how biblical history and scientific knowledge worked together can be seen in the story of a king who thought he was a...**cow!**

In chapter 4 of the book of Daniel we are told about a man by the name of Nebuchadnezzar who was the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was rich and powerful. He had a gorgeous palace, and he had built impressive cities throughout the land. But he had refused to give God the glory for his many successes.

One night, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that was very disturbing to him. He did not understand the dream, so he called for a young man named Daniel to come tell him what the dream meant. Daniel loved God with all his heart, and prayed to Him often. Nebuchadnezzar knew this, and thought that perhaps Daniel could interpret his dream.

Upon Daniel's arrival, the king described the dream he had experienced the night before. Nebuchadnezzar said that he saw a tree that grew to be tall and strong. Its leaves were lovely, and it produced abundant fruit. The beasts of the field ate from the tree, and the birds of the heavens made nests in its branches. But, as the king went on to explain, he saw "a holy watcher" descend from heaven. The one who had come from heaven then said,

"Chop down the tree and cut off its branches. Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, and the birds leave its branches. But leave the stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from that of a man, and let him be given the heart of a beast. And let seven times pass over him. This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men."

When the king told Daniel what he had dreamed, Daniel became very upset because he knew that if he told the king the truth about what the dream meant, Nebuchadnezzar probably would not like what he heard. But the king said, "Daniel, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you." Daniel knew that he had to tell the truth, so he told Nebuchadnezzar what his dream meant.

Daniel explained that the tall tree that Nebuchadnezzar had seen represented the king himself. As the king of Babylon, he had become powerful and famous. However, as Daniel continued to speak, it became obvious that most of the remaining information in the king's dream was bad—**very, very bad**. Daniel told the king that he was going to lose his place as king of Babylon. But that was not the worst part.

Daniel also said that the king was going to end up living with the beasts in the fields, that his back would become wet with the morning dew, and that he even would eat grass like cattle and oxen. Daniel said that Nebuchadnezzar would remain in that condition until he learned to love and honor God.

Then Daniel gave Nebuchadnezzar a single piece of good news. He said that Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom would be returned to him **if** he would admit that the God of heaven—not human kings—reigned supreme on the Earth.

One year later, as Nebuchadnezzar was strolling in the gardens of his palace, he said to himself with a great deal of pride, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" The Bible says that as he was speaking those very words, a voice from heaven said to him,

"King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it was spoken: The kingdom has departed from you! And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses" (Daniel 4:31-32).

The Bible then says, "That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws" (Daniel 4:33).

People who do not accept the Bible as God's Word have suggested that this story could not possibly be true. But today we know that there actually is a rare medical condition that can cause people to act exactly like Nebuchadnezzar did. It is known as boanthropy (boe-an-throw-pee). When people are afflicted with boanthropy, they do not like to be indoors, and will spend almost all of their free time outdoors if allowed to do so. Furthermore, they gladly will eat grass like an ox or cow, and even will drink from muddy puddles like most animals do. The hair on their bodies becomes coarse, and their fingernails and toenails become thick and long.

The Bible's description of what happened to Nebuchadnezzar sounds very much like God caused the king to come down with a case of boanthropy in order to teach him a lesson. Did Nebuchadnezzar learn his lesson? Yes, he did. Daniel 4:34-37 tells us that Nebuchadnezzar realized he had been wrong for not giving God the glory for his successes, and he repented and changed his ways. As a result, he was cured, and was able to return to his palace to take his rightful place as king of Babylon.

This story is a perfect example of how something that "sounds too strange to be true" actually **can** be true. We must remember that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). In other words, **God doesn't make mistakes!** God says what He means, and means what He says. Nebuchadnezzar learned that lesson the hard way. I hope **we** don't have to, don't you?