

- Recap of last week: Daniel and friends were taken away to exile in Babylon, where they were chosen to be among the elite in service to the King. (Daniel 1:1-7) They refuse to eat meat, and God gave them so much wisdom that they distinguished themselves, not just from their peers but even the King's own advisors. (Daniel 1:18-12) Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar about a dream the king had and what it meant, unwittingly telling the future hundreds of years in advance. (Daniel 2) Daniel's friends refuse to worship a statue the King made so he throws them into a furnace of fire but they protected by God. (Daniel 3)
- Nebuchadnezzar has another disturbing dream. This time (unlike in the first dream he had where he wanted the dream told, too) he actually tells his advisors the dream and wants them to interpret it but they still cannot. (Daniel 4:4-7)
- He summons Daniel and tells him about his dream. He saw a very tall tree with lots of leaves and fruit. Then he saw someone descending from heaven saying "cut it down but leave the stump" and then the stump that had the heart of a man should be changed to the heart of a best until "seven times come over him." (Daniel 4:8-18)
- Daniel tells him that this dream means that if he doesn't repent, he is going to be like the beast of the field for a long period. Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar he can prove his repentance by "showing mercy to the poor." (Daniel 4:19-28)
- A wise man shows mercy to the poor, because in doing so one is honoring God, the converse is also true. (Proverbs 14:31)
- Jesus even commands a rich man to sell everything he has and give it to the poor. (Matthew 19:20-21). God knows what we are most attached to and will ask us to give that up. In the case of the rich man, like Nebuchadnezzar, the problem was being attached to wealth.
- For a year nothing happens to Nebuchadnezzar, and he doesn't think it will. That hour, he becomes like a wild beast, eating grass, living outside, and letting his nails grow. Finally, he praises God and realizes he can humble the proud and he goes back to normal. (Daniel 4:29-37)
- Remember that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. (Psalm 138:6; Proverbs 3:34; Proverbs 29:23; Matthew 23:12; Luke 1:52; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5) and pride goes before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18).
- Nebuchadnezzar was deposed from the throne for being proud (Daniel 5:20) , leaving his son Belshazzar (not to be confused with Belteshazzar, Daniel's Babylonian name) in charge. His son throws a big feast and worships false gods. (Daniel 5:1-4)
- While they were feasting, a disembodied hand wrote MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN on the wall in the King's palace. The King is freaked out by this event and asks everyone to interpret it and they cannot, but they say "don't worry, we know a man who can probably do it." (Daniel 5:5-12)
- Daniel comes in and first rebukes the King for not humbling himself the way his father had. Then he says "MENE means God has finished your kingdom, TEKEL means you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting, and UPHARSIN means Peres – that your kingdom will be conquered by the Medes and Persians." That night Darius the Median took the kingdom and killed Belshazzar. (Daniel 5:13-31)

- Daniel is made a high official by King Darius. Jealous officials conspire to get Darius to make a decree forbidding worshipping anyone but himself for 30 days or be thrown into a den of lions. (Daniel 6:1-9)
- Daniel prays to God anyway. The jealous people tell Darius. Darius reluctantly has Daniel thrown into the den of lions. God protects Daniel from harm. Darius tells everyone to worship Daniel's God. (Daniel 6:10-28)
- Daniel has a vivid dream about four beasts. The first is a lion with eagles wings and a man's heart. The second is a bear with three ribs in its mouth. The third is a leopard with four heads and bird wings. The fourth was much more fearsome and strong with iron teeth and ten horns, three of them with eyes and mouths. Then he sees God come, destroy the fourth beast immediately and the other three less immediately and establishes an everlasting dominion. (Daniel 7:1-14)
- Daniel is freaked out about all this in his dream and asks someone to interpret for him (presumably still in his dream). The person says the four beasts are four kingdoms, the fourth of which will be the worst and finally when it falls it will spawn ten kingdoms and that is what the horns are. Daniel is still freaked out about this when he wakes up but still keeps it to himself. (Daniel 7:15-28)

Questions:

1. What is different about Nebuchadnezzar trying to get his second dream interpreted than when he was trying to get his first dream interpreted?
2. What was Nebuchadnezzar's second dream?
3. How does Daniel say that Nebuchadnezzar can prove his penitent attitude?
4. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's insanity.
5. What finally brings Nebuchadnezzar out of his insanity?
6. Who is in charge after Nebuchadnezzar?
7. What happens while the successor to Nebuchadnezzar is feasting?
8. Who gets Darius to sign a decree indicating no worship for 30 days?
9. What is the penalty for disobeying this decree?
10. What is Daniel's strange, vivid dream?
11. What does Daniel's dream mean?