

## EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 4

### FIRST DAY

#### Read Lesson 3 Notes

### SECOND DAY:

#### Read Daniel 3:1-18

##### The Image of Gold and the Fiery Furnace

[3:1] King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. [2] He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. [3] So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

[4] Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language: [5] As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. [6] Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”

[7] Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

[8] At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. [9] They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! [10] You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, [11] and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. [12] But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve

your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

[13] Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, [14] and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? [15] Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

[16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. [17] If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. [18] But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

#### Question 4

See Daniel 1-2

### THIRD Day:

#### Read Daniel 3:19-30

[19] Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual [20] and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. [21] So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. [22] The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, [23] and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

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[24] Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"

They replied, "Certainly, O king."

[25] He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

[26] Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, [27] and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

[28] Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. [29] Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

[30] Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

May you prosper greatly!

[2] It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.

[3] How great are his signs,  
how mighty his wonders!  
His kingdom is an eternal kingdom;  
his dominion endures from generation to generation.

[4] I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. [5] I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. [6] So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. [7] When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. [8] Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

[9] I said, "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me. [10] These are the visions I saw while lying in my bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. [11] The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. [12] Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the beasts of the field found shelter, and the birds of the air lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.

[13] "In the visions I saw while lying in my bed, I looked, and there before me was a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. [14] He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. [15] But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field.

"Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. [16] Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him.

### **FOURTH DAY:**

### **Read Daniel 4:1-27**

#### **Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Tree**

[4:1] King Nebuchadnezzar,

To the peoples, nations and men of every language,  
who live in all the world:

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[17] “The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.”

[18] “This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

### Daniel Interprets the Dream

[19] Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.”

Belteshazzar answered, “My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! [20] The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, [21] with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the beasts of the field, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds of the air— [22] you, O king, are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

[23] “You, O king, saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live like the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.’

[24] “This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: [25] You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes. [26] The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. [27] Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”

### Question 10b

**Genesis 2:9;** [9] And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

**Genesis 3:14-24;** [14] So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,

“Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals!  
You will crawl on your belly  
and you will eat dust  
all the days of your life.  
[15] And I will put enmity  
between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;  
he will crush your head,  
and you will strike his heel.”

[16] To the woman he said,

“I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing;  
with pain you will give birth to children.  
Your desire will be for your husband,  
and he will rule over you.”

[17] To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’

“Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat of it  
all the days of your life.

[18] It will produce thorns and thistles for you,  
and you will eat the plants of the field.

[19] By the sweat of your brow  
you will eat your food  
until you return to the ground,  
since from it you were taken;  
for dust you are  
and to dust you will return.”

[20] Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

[21] The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. [22] And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be

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allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” [23] So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. [24] After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

**Genesis 11:5-9;** [5] But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. [6] The LORD said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. [7] Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”

[8] So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. [9] That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

### **FIFTH DAY**

#### **Read Daniel 4:28-37**

##### **The Dream Is Fulfilled**

[28] All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. [29] Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, [30] he said, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?”

[31] The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, “This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. [32] You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.”

[33] Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away

from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

[34] At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever.

His dominion is an eternal dominion;  
his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

[35] All the peoples of the earth  
are regarded as nothing.

He does as he pleases  
with the powers of heaven  
and the peoples of the earth.  
No one can hold back his hand  
or say to him: “What have you done?”

[36] At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. [37] Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

### **SIXTH DAY:**

#### **Review Daniel 3 and 4** **(See above)**

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