



1. Abarbanel, Maayanei haYeshuah, Maayan 6, Tamar 5 (pg. 317-318)

והוא חשב בלבו לבטל הגזירה העליונה ההיא ולסדר עניני מלכויות הארץ באופן שיהיו נכנעים ומשועבדים לו ולזרעו לעולם... ומפני הגאווה ההוללת הזאת נגזר עליו לטרונו מבני אדם וללכת כעיר פרא בין החיות...

He thought that he would erase the heavenly decree and arrange the earthly empires such that they would be humbled and enslaved before him and his seed forever... Due to this empty arrogance, it was decreed that he would be chased from human society, to travel like a wild donkey among the beasts...

2. Daniel 3:31 – 4:34 (JPS translation, modified)

³¹Nebuchadnezzar the king, to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; peace be multiplied to you. ³²It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders that G-d Most High has performed toward me. ³³How great are His signs! and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.

¹I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. ²I saw a dream which made me afraid; and imaginings upon my bed and the visions of my head affrighted me. ³Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. ⁴Then came in the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers; and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known to me the interpretation thereof. ⁵But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and I told the dream before him: ⁶O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no secret causes you trouble, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof. ⁷Thus were the visions of my head upon my bed: I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. ⁸The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached to heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. ⁹The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was food for all; the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the branches thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. ¹⁰I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven. ¹¹He cried aloud, and said thus: Hew down the tree, and cut off its branches, shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from its branches. ¹²Nevertheless leave the stump of its roots in the earth, in a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth; ¹³Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given to him; and let seven times pass over him. ¹⁴The matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will, and sets up over it the lowest of men. ¹⁵This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen; and you, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you.'

¹⁶Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while, and his thoughts affrighted him. The king spoke and said: 'Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation, affright you.' Belteshazzar answered and said: 'My lord, the dream be to them that hate you, and the interpretation thereof to your adversaries. ¹⁷The tree that you saw, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached to the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; ¹⁸whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was food for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation; ¹⁹it is you, O king, who are grown and become strong; for your greatness is grown, and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the end of the earth. ²⁰And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying: Hew down the tree, and destroy it; nevertheless leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, in a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him—²¹this is the interpretation, O king, and it is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king, ²²that you shall be driven from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and you shalt be made to eat grass as oxen, and shalt be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you; till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will. ²³And whereas it was

commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be sure to you, after you shall have known that the heavens do rule. ²⁴Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you, and break off your sins by philanthropy, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.'

²⁵All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁶At the end of twelve months he was walking upon the royal palace of Babylon. ²⁷The king spoke, and said: 'Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for a royal dwelling-place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?' ²⁸While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven: 'O king Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom is departed from you. ²⁹And you shalt be driven from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; you shalt be made to eat grass as 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 whomsoever He will.' ³⁰The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair was grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. ³¹And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him who lives for ever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom from generation to generation; ³²And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He does according to His will in the host of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say to Him: What doest Thou? ³³At the same time mine understanding returned to me; and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and my splendour returned to me; and my ministers and my lords sought me; and I was established in my kingdom, and surpassing greatness was added to me. ³⁴Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven; for all His works are truth, and His ways justice; and those that walk in pride He is able to abase.'

3. Abarbanel, Maayanei haYeshuah, Maayan 6, Tamar 5 (pg. 318)

והראו לו שהאדם עץ השדה ושהוא היה כאותו האילן הגדול והגבוה והיפה אבל צומח והוא נפסד בהכרח

They showed him that man is a tree of the field. He is like that great, tall, beautiful tree, but he must [likewise] grow, exist, and then be destroyed.

4. Abarbanel, Maayanei haYeshuah, Maayan 6, Tamar 4 (pg. 317)

אם היתה הגזירה עבור גאותו הנה אם יכנע לעבוד השפלים ממנו והם העניים תסור זאת הגזירה

Were the decree for his arrogance, then if he would serve lowlier people, the needy, then the decree would vanish.

5. Midrash Tanchuma Mishpatim 4

פתח אותו רשע אוצרותיו וחלק להם י"ב חדש לאחר י"ב חדש שכח אותו רשע את החלום והתחיל לטייל על פלטרין שלו שמע קול המון צעקת העניים לפני אוצרותיו אמר לעבדיו מה קול זה שאני שומע, אמרו לו העניים שהגלית תובעים פרנסתם, מיד נכנס בו עין רעה, ענה מלכא ואמר "הלא דא היא בבל רבתא די אנה בנייתה לבית מלכו בתקף חסני וליקר הדרי" (ד:כז) אמר אילולי בית הממון שלי מהיכן אני בונה המדינה הזו כולה? צוה ופסק להם שנאמר (ד:כח) "עוד מלתא בפום מלכא וגו'" אמר ליה הקב"ה רשע מי גרם לך שלוח כל אותן י"ב חדש? הלא הצדקה שעשית! ומה אומות העולם כך [נענשים על קמצנות] ישראל על אחת כמה וכמה...

The wicked one opened his stores and distributed to the people for twelve months. After twelve months, the wicked one forgot the dream. He began to stroll atop his palace, where he heard the cries of the poor masses before his [still open] stores. He asked his servants, "What is this sound I hear?" They said, "The paupers you exiled are demanding their support." A stingy eye entered him, and the king replied (4:27), "This is great Babylon, which I built to house a palace, with my strength and my glory!" He said, "Without my stores, how could I build up this entire land?" He decreed that the aid be halted, as the text continues, "The word was still in the king's mouth, etc."

Gd said to him, "Wicked one! What caused your peace all twelve months? It was the tzedakah you practiced!" And if this happens to the nations [for stinginess], how much more so for Israel.

6. Abarbanel Maayan 6, Tamar 5 (pg. 318-319)

התשובה האמיתית בזה היא שני"נ כאשר הכיר בעונשו וידע חטאתו אשר חטא שם על לבו לעשות תשובה שלמה והוא ראה שהיה עונו בחלול ד' בחשבו לבטל הגזירה ולשדד יכלתו ושעל כן באה עליו הצרה הזאת ושהיה דרך התשובה שלמה על עון חלול ד' לקדש שמו ברבים...

The truth is that Nevuchadnezzar, when he recognized his punishment and knew his sin, turned his heart to repent. He saw that his sin was in desecrating Gd's Name by thinking to cancel the [Divine decree] and thwart His will, and that this was why the trouble had come upon him. He realized that the way to repent fully for the sin of desecrating Gd's Name would be to sanctify His Name publicly...