

# Daniel 4:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

## Analysis

**This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof**—The king's direct appeal to Daniel after his magicians failed (4:7) reveals both desperation and confidence. Nebuchadnezzar learned from chapter 2 that only Daniel's God reveals mysteries. The phrase "declare the interpretation" (pishra emer, פִּשְׂרָא אֶמַר) uses the imperative—commanding yet respectful, acknowledging Daniel's unique ability.

**Forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation** (כָּל־חַכְמֵי מַלְכוּתִי לֹא־יָכְלִין פִּשְׂרָא לְהוֹדֵעַתִּי)—The Aramaic kol-chakmey malkuthi la-yakhlin ("all the wise men of my kingdom are not able") emphasizes comprehensive failure of Babylon's wisdom establishment. This recurring pattern (chapters 2, 4, 5) demonstrates human wisdom's bankruptcy before divine mysteries. Pagan learning, divorced from revelation, cannot penetrate God's purposes.

**But thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee** (וְאַנְתָּה כֹּהֵל דִּי רוּחַ) (אֵלֵהִין קַדִּישִׁין בְּךָ)—Though Nebuchadnezzar misidentifies the source ("gods" plural rather than the one true God), he correctly recognizes supernatural enablement. The phrase ruach elahin qaddishin ("spirit of holy gods/God") acknowledges Daniel

operates by divine power, not human technique. This inadvertent testimony from a pagan king confirms what Scripture consistently teaches: true wisdom requires God's Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-14). Daniel will soon interpret a dream announcing the king's humiliation—demonstrating that God's servants speak truth even to power.

## Historical Context

---

This occurred late in Nebuchadnezzar's reign (after 37 years of rule, based on 4:29-30). Despite earlier encounters with Daniel's God (chapters 2-3), the king remained essentially pagan, acknowledging Yahweh's power while maintaining polytheism. His inability to learn from previous humbling experiences sets up the dramatic judgment of chapter 4. Ancient kings surrounded themselves with yes-men; Daniel's willingness to interpret bad news truthfully (4:19, 27) exemplifies prophetic courage.

## Related Passages

---

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

---

1. How does Nebuchadnezzar's recognition that Daniel has 'the spirit of the holy gods' challenge you to live in such a way that even unbelievers recognize God's presence in your life?
2. What does it mean to speak truth to power when the message is unwelcome, as Daniel must in interpreting this dream?

## Interlinear Text

---

וְאֵת נִתְּהָ	נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר	מֶלֶךְ אֶנְהָ	חָזַיְתָּ	חֲלֵמָא	דָּנָה	
<b>Now thou</b>	<b>Nebuchadnezzar</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>have seen</b>	<b>dream</b>	<b>This</b>	
H607	H5020	H4430	H576	H2493	H1836	
כָּל דָּיִן	קִבֵּל	כָּל אֲמַר	פִּשְׁרָא	בִּלְטַשְׁאֲצַר		
<b>all</b>	<b>thereof forasmuch as</b>	<b>declare</b>	<b>the interpretation</b>	<b>O Belteshazzar</b>		
H1768	H6903	H560	H6591	H1096		
לְהוֹדִיעַ עוֹתַי נִי	פִּשְׁרָא	יָכֹל יִן	לֹא	מַלְכוּתַי	חֲכִימַי	
<b>to make known</b>	<b>the interpretation</b>	<b>able</b>	<b>are not</b>	<b>men of my kingdom</b>	<b>the wise</b>	
H3046	H6591	H3202	H3809	H4437	H2445	
בְּרִי: קְדִישׁ יִן	אֱלֹהֵי יִן	רוּחַ	דָּיִן	כֹּהֵל	וְאֵת נִתְּהָ	
<b>of the holy</b>	<b>gods</b>	<b>for the spirit</b>		<b>art able</b>	<b>Now thou</b>	
H0	H6922	H426	H7308	H3546	H607	

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Genesis 41:8** (Spirit): And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

**Daniel 5:15** (Parallel theme): And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing:

**Genesis 41:15** (Parallel theme): And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.

**Daniel 5:8** (Kingdom): Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.