

Nebuchadnezzar Is Humbled

Daniel 4:28-37

MEMORY VERSE

DANIEL 4:37

“Those who walk in pride He is able to put down.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Blank paper (one sheet per student), markers and/or crayons.

Five different shapes of cups or glasses, five saucers, 50 cents in pennies and small prizes to award the children (ie: pencils, erasers, etc.).

A sheet of construction paper for each child (any color), a “Humble Pie” template for each child, markers or crayons, scissors and glue stick.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Proud Animals

Give each child a blank piece of paper and markers or crayons. Pass out the paper and tell them to draw an animal that might make them think of pride or being proud (some suggestions might be a lion, tiger, peacock, eagle, or bear). After drawing have each child share their picture with the class and tell why they chose that animal as representing pride.

Today, we will learn about the experience of a king who had a very grand opinion of himself. Perhaps, he strutted like a peacock or roared to voice his power like a lion. But, God hates the pride of man. This king is about to learn a valuable lesson in humility. **“Pride goes before destruction...” (Proverbs 16:18).**

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever had a great accomplishment like getting straight A's in school or creating an art project that was fantastic? Did your parents and friends congratulate you; did they praise you in your efforts? When we respond to praise or the understanding we have done well with humility, we are recognizing that our gifts and talents are a gift of God who created us for His pleasure. Because, we have received our gifts and talents from God, it is foolish to become prideful about them! The Bible warns, **“Pride goes before destruction...” (Proverbs 16:18).**

King Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of all Babylon, once more had a dream that greatly troubled him. Knowing Daniel could interpret dreams, the king called for him. Upon hearing the dream, Daniel was greatly troubled himself; he stood speechless. Finally, he spoke, “My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies.” Daniel went on to interpret the dream. King Nebuchadnezzar was warned that he was being “watched” from Heaven. God was prepared not only to remove the kingdom from the prideful king, but to discipline him in a pretty harsh manner. Daniel urged the king to repent from his sins—to do righteousness and show mercy to the poor, lest the dream unfold.

It would seem King Nebuchadnezzar heeded the warning and watched his steps more carefully for about a year. But then, it was as though the dream had all but been forgotten.

DANIEL 4:28-30

All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.

At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon.

The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"

King Nebuchadnezzar was walking about his palace, giving praise to himself. Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten that everything he had was from the hand of God. His heart was filled with pride. Everything good in his life was because he was so great and majestic; at least that's what he thought!

DANIEL 4:31, 32

While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is 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."

Imagine! God does not even let King Nebuchadnezzar finish his selfish thoughts and words. How foolish the king had been to take credit for his success and fail to give glory to God.

The dream which Daniel had interpreted for the king one year prior was now about to come true. Can you imagine how scared Nebuchadnezzar must have been? God had been merciful to warn him through Daniel. Oh that the king had remembered the warning and guarded his heart from foolish sins!

Yet now, Nebuchadnezzar must learn the lesson the hard way. It is God who rules in the kingdoms of men. He maintains the power to give kingdoms to whom ever He chooses and to take away kingdoms whenever He chooses.

Pride is a very dangerous thing. When we do something well, we like Nebuchadnezzar, may be tempted to think we did it because we are wonderful. How important that we learn the lesson God had to teach Nebuchadnezzar. It was God who had made Nebuchadnezzar powerful and had given him the kingdom of Babylon. Instead of thinking he was the best, he should have been giving the glory to God. Pride goes before destruction.

DANIEL 4:33

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.

Imagine the humiliation King Nebuchadnezzar faced. This was a king who had always dressed in the finest apparel and ate only the best delicacies. Now, having lost his sanity, he took on the appearance of a wild animal.

DANIEL 4:34-35

And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation.

All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

Nebuchadnezzar had been broken and living in the wilderness as a beast for “seven times.” The seven times probably represent a year and three quarters (each quarter representing a season, spring, summer, etc.) rather than seven years. One day he declared, “My understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever...” Nebuchadnezzar’s whole perspective had changed. He saw things rightly, with a pure heart.

When he was king, power and riches had blinded him. God had to pull him down to a place that he would honor God as being in complete control of everything. Nebuchadnezzar was able to see God’s greatness. Now with a pure heart, he was full of thanksgiving; though he had lost all the world considers valuable, he could now understand the power and glory of God and see things rightly.

How do we respond to the understanding of God’s control over our lives and circumstances? God had dealt severely with Nebuchadnezzar, chastening (correcting) him for his sins and bringing him to the eventual place of repentance. Nebuchadnezzar responded gratefully to the understanding of God’s control.

God is not opposed to using painful processes in our lives to correct us when necessary. In Hebrews 12:5-13, we are exhorted not to be discouraged when we are chastened, but to yield ourselves to our loving Father who chastens us in order that He might benefit us (bring a good outcome for us). As we endure chastening, God heals (fixes) what is wrong in our lives, the good fruits of righteousness are produced within us, and we are set, once more, in a place where we can be useful to Him. We will not always understand God’s ways (Isaiah 55:8-9) or dealings in our lives, but do we trust Him? We can continually rest in the understanding of God’s unwavering love for us.

DANIEL 4:36, 37

At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me.

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

Nebuchadnezzar repented and God restored his mind and his kingdom! Even more precious than great riches, silver, or gold, God allowed this man to see the splendor of God's ways. Surely his kingdom would be ruled in a much different way!

We can learn much from King Nebuchadnezzar's experience. May we not allow the sin of pride to bring destruction in our own lives. We need to remember that it is God who gives us the gifts, talents, and abilities we have. God will humble his children who fall into the dangerous sin of pride. May we be sensitive and responsive when God warns us of the dangers and consequences of sin. King Nebuchadnezzar could have spared himself a very painful lesson had he heeded God's warning! And, should we experience God's discipline as consequence of our disobedience, may we remember His purpose is to benefit us. May we patiently allow God to bring forth the good fruits of righteousness in our lives.

Have a Slice of Humble Pie

Use this activity to reinforce the memory verse today. You will need a sheet of construction paper for each child (any color), a “Humble Pie” template, markers or crayons, scissors, and glue stick. The children should cut out the slices from the template and glue them in the right order onto a piece of construction paper, then decorate.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to reject pride and embrace humility. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

Have a slice of Humble Pie

