

Daniel 4v4-19;29-36

"I, Nebuchadnezzar, **was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace.**

"I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream."

"Then the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me. "But finally Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and I related the dream to him, saying, 'O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell me the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation.

'Now these were the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed: I was looking, and behold, there was a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great...

'The tree grew large and became strong And its height reached to the sky, And it was visible to the end of the whole earth.

'Its foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, And in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, And the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches, And all living creatures fed themselves from it.

'I was looking in the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed, and behold, an angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven.

'He shouted out and spoke as follows: "Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit; Let the beasts flee from under it And the birds from its branches.

"Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field; And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth.

"Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let a beast's mind be given to him, and let seven periods of time pass over him.

"This **sentence** is by the decree of the angelic watchers, and the decision is a command of the holy ones, in order that the living may know, that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes and sets over it the lowliest of men." "This is the dream which I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen.

Now you, Belteshazzar, tell me its interpretation, inasmuch as none of the wise men of my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.'

"Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, **was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him.**

"Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. "The king reflected and said, '**Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?**'" "While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field.

You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you **until you recognize** that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and **bestows it on whomever He wishes.**'

"Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

I want to sit one more week in Daniel 4. As we looked at this passage last week and how it reveals this beautiful picture of God's deep desire to be known by man, I was caught by something that I had not seen prior.

_____ Nebuchadnezzar had several encounters with God prior to this passage.

In each of these encounters, the power and supernatural reality of heaven was presented to him.

In each moment, he had an option to yield who he was and bow his heart to the Almighty.

In each situation, he *acknowledged* God, yet, never bowed his heart.

Based upon this narrative:

-it would appear that God was looking for something in Nebuchadnezzar that He was not finding.

-it would appear that God was finding something He was not pleased with.

There are a couple phrases in the text that indicate what it was:

v17

*"This **sentence** is by the decree of the angelic watchers, and the decision is a command of the holy ones, in order that the living may know, that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes and sets over it the lowliest of men."* *"This is the dream which I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen.*

A sentence?

We sentence criminals to specific seasons in captivity. Why? Because that time, in said process, is intended to teach them to do better. The logic is that by being robbed of time, they will see the error of their ways.

This is what Heaven was doing with Nebuchadnezzar.

That is interesting. Heaven gives a, "sentencing," to a man who doesn't even claim to serve it.

v28

"The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'

Nebuchadnezzar had traversed into incredibly dangerous territory where his personal successes and his personal perception began to inform his identity. He saw the world around him as an evidence of his greatness.

In a simple description, he had become incredibly proud.

Maybe pride is a bigger deal than we think.

Could I suggest that pride in man causes a reaction in the King of Glory? Why?

Consider last week...God's passion is to be known.

Pride forces God away.

He is inclined to resist it.

He resists the proud but embraces the humble (James 4v6)

So, to be consistent with His loving nature, when man won't deal with it, He has to deal with it.

Because if He loves us, He must...He knows the danger of pride

Proverbs 16 says that, "*pride precedes destruction.*"

Pride blinds us from reality.

Pride is the deeply rooted self focus that robs truth and reality from our perspective.

I would suggest that pride connects man with the demonic.

Pride is the original production of Lucifer. It is his modus operandi.

"I will be like the most high..." (Isaiah 14)

If we consider the timeline of this story, God had sent the dream 12 months prior to this event.

Why?

He knew that Nebuchadnezzar could adjust his heart.

I believe there was a grace being given, one that was giving Nebuchadnezzar time to consider his heart.

Nebuchadnezzar did not adjust...so God used a different tactic to help him.

Difficulty.

It worked. Nebuchadnezzar got the point.

34 "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason 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 endures from generation to generation.

35 "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand, Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

*36 "At that time my reason returned to me. **And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom,** and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. 37 "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and **He is able to humble those who walk in pride.**"*

Can I apply this to us?

It is incredibly easy to allow our successes to inform our identity.

It is also incredibly dangerous to allow our successes to inform our identity.

How do I know if I am doing it?

Nebuchadnezzar's language is a clue for us.

1. Listen for the, "I," factor in your language. Are you self focused?
2. Listen for your need to get credit for accomplishments. Are your insecurities speaking out?
3. Watch for the need for position and power. (The belief that, "if I just...")
4. Watch over hierarchical thinking towards others. (Entitlement)

These are indicators that you are moving dangerously into pride. When you see them, take note, and repent.

How do I remedy it?

Follow Nebuchadnezzar's response...

1. Process every encounter with His power as an invitation to know Him. (

Our encounters with his power should lead us to his Lordship.

2. Lift your eyes to heaven.

Upturned face is the posture of prayer in the Scriptures.

Living a life of relational conversation with God has the beautiful effect of teaching us who He is.

The more we encounter His Presence, the more we understand His greatness.

3. Declare His goodness.

Learning to declare, speak out, the goodness of God, reminds me of who is in control.

4. Take your place as a servant of all.

This is Jesus' model. He could have been served, but came to serve.

The warning for us is clear:

If God, being just, will deal with Nebuchadnezzar in this way, how much more will he deal with his own children if we walk in pride and refuse to deal it when we see it.