

HOW THE MIGHTY FALL!

Dan. 4

What does *GOD* think about people who become great & trust their own ability to pull off anything they want?

*God humbles the proud
and exalts the humble.*

When we start thinking of ourselves as great, God dedicates *Himself* to teaching us that He's the GREAT ONE & forces us to recognize how insignificant we are.

Principle is as clear today as in Daniel's day.

When we decide we're pretty hot, God reminds us He's the only One worthy of special attention.

God doesn't share His glory with anyone.

Nebu., king whose middle name was "*Pride*," illustrates it.

People who try to govern independently eventually learn *Who's in charge*.

When we ignore Him, we get a class in humility and divine government.

4th example: Different kind of tension!

**Nebu's TESTIMONY OF GOD'S WORK IN HIS LIFE!
KING'S ADDRESS 4:1-3**

Nebu. addresses nations to testify to God's sovereignty
4:1-3 *King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, & languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! ²It has seemed good to me to show the signs & wonders that the Most High God has done for me. ³How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an ever-lasting kingdom, & his dominion endures from generation to generation.*

God reveals Himself to Nebu. to convince him of His unique place among gods & His intervention for His people.

In spite of acknowledging Yahweh's superiority over other gods, Nebu. hadn't made a personal profession of trust in Yahweh as *his* God.

Dan 4 describes his *personal* encounter with God.

Nebu. would never be same proud king.

VISION OF THE CUT TREE 4:4-18

During time of prosperity, Nebu. is quietly lying in bed.

He has it all!

Suddenly, he sees a vision that startles him.

Sends for the experts,

but normal interpreters don't get it.

He calls Daniel to interpret the dream 4:4-9 *I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house & prospering in my palace. ⁵I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies & visions of my head alarmed me. ⁶So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. ⁷Then the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, & astrologers came in, & I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation. ⁸At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, & in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—& I told him the dream, saying, ⁹“O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you & no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw & their interpretation.*

King distinguishes "his gods" from "the spirit of the holy gods" in Daniel.

Daniel's God has unique ability to reveal future things;
He also sees difference in the *character* of Daniel's God.

His gods don't have to be holy!

They just have to be powerful! –able to give victory!

King sees great tree protecting multitudes, cut down. 10-18

Tree's beautiful & produces much fruit.

In spite of protection it gave others, it would be cut down; its fruit and protected beasts scattered.

Its roots would not be removed.

Judgment would end after 7 "periods of time." = 7 yrs.

Explanation: 17 "to the end that *the living may know the Most High rules the kingdom of men & gives it to whom he will & sets over it lowliest of men*

Nebu. not sure what it means; suspects it has something to do with him;

he'd better find out what it means

Daniel would know.

He can give him an answer.

INTERPRETATION 4:19-27

Daniel hesitates, because of message **19** –doesn't want to tell the king.

Expressing desire this happen to enemies, Daniel explains tree represents king; he'll be humbled, & lose kingdom for a while

22 "It's you, O king, who have grown & become strong. Your greatness has grown & reaches to heaven, & your dominion to the

ends of the earth... ²⁵“You shall be driven from among men, & your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, & you shall be wet with the dew of heaven; 7 periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men & gives it to whom he will”.

Restoration promised — once he learns God rules governments & gives the kingdom to whomever He wants.

26-27 “As it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know Heaven rules. ²⁷Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, & your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may be lengthening of your prosperity.”

Daniel urges him to take the remedy now! Do it NOW! Nebuchadnezzar isn't ready for that.

Pride's in the way.

FULFILLMENT 4:28-33

1 yr later, prophecy fulfilled!

His pride 28-30

King's wandering about house, considering view of city, thinking about great works HE has accomplished.

He's boasting: **30** “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by MY mighty power as a royal residence & for the glory of MY majesty?”

He gives no credit to God nor HIS achievements!

Judgment 31-32a While words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you

it's spoken: The kingdom has departed from you. ³²You shall be driven from among men, & your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, & 7 periods of time shall pass over you,

While he's speaking, God humbles the pagan king. His kingdom is taken away.

Nebu. spends 7 yrs wandering in field; acting like beast,

Purpose 32b *"until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men & gives it to whom he will."*

He had to learn Who's in charge!

Accomplishments aren't result of his greatness, but abilities God gave him, for His glory.

Fact 33 *"Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men, ate grass like an ox, & his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, & his nails were like birds' claws."*

Everything was accomplished as God announced.

KING'S RESTORATION 4:34-36

Result of judgment => his profession

34-35 *At the end of the days I, Nebu. lifted my eyes to heaven, & my reason returned to me. I blessed the Most High, & praised & honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, & his kingdom endures from generation to generation; ³⁵all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, & he does according to his will among the host of heaven & among the inhabitants of the earth; none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"*

7 yrs later!

Nebu. realizes how foolish he's been & affirms submission to God

Sometimes it takes catastrophe to bring us to the end of ourselves, so we learn to depend on God.

He learns God deserves credit for what he accomplishes.

His restoration 36 *"At the same time my reason returned to me, & for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty & splendor returned to me. My counselors & my lords sought me. I was established in my kingdom, & still more greatness was added to me."*

His kingdom was restored — greater than before.

Great miracle: preserving throne while king's roaming with animals.

No lack of politicians to take advantage—take over the throne.

GOD'S EXALTATION 4:37

Nebu. pagan king ends with affirmation of praise to God
37 *"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise & extol & honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right & his ways are just; & those who walk in pride he is able to humble."*

Do you know who identified with Nebuchadnezzar, "new Nebuchadnezzar" head of "new Babylon?" —even made profile busts from Nebuchadnezzar's statues & his own likeness to show similarity!

*Would world notice if Saddam Hussein had made similar profession?

Testimony from most powerful king, no less notorious than similar testimony from Hussein!

He glorifies God and acknowledges His authority

What's basic message?

God appoints rulers & removes those who fail to acknowledge Him.

Two lessons:

(1) God's sovereignty—in control even when doesn't look like it! **34b-35** *"His dominion is an everlasting dominion, his kingdom endures from generation to generation;³⁵ all inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, & he does according to his will among the host of heaven & among the inhabitants of the earth; none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"*

It may *feel* like everything's out of control

God is there; world's still in His hand

GOD IS STILL IN CONTROL!

He has right to be Lord in our personal lives as well!

God may bring us to end of ourselves so we acknowledge His right to rule our life.

(2) Danger of pride: God's able to humble proud people!

People live to make name for themselves.

When we begin to think about great things WE've accomplished, **Remember Nebuchadnezzar:**

God may turn us out to roam with wild animals!"

People who live proud, unbroken lives may become great and accomplish incredible feats, but all that power and pride stands against qualities God considers great.

If we're gifted, we may be able to do great things that cause people to be impressed with our skills and abilities.... we'll be tempted to make a name for ourselves, to demand our rights; expect special treatment.

REMEMBER NEBUCHADNEZZAR!

We must humble ourselves & submit to Christ's authority, give Him total control and all the glory. Corrie Ten Boom, asked if it's difficult to stay humble: "When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on donkey, & everyone was waving palm branches & singing praises, do you think it ever entered the head of that donkey that any of that was for him? If I can be a donkey on which Jesus Christ rides in His glory, I give *Him* all the praise & all the honor."

REMEMBER NEBUCHADNEZZAR!