

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON
WEEK 35

God humbles Nebuchadnezzar

Daniel 4:1-37



DAY 1

God gave Nebuchadnezzar a terrifying dream • Daniel 4:1-18

READ

Daniel 4:1-18

EXPLAIN

The truth of Daniel 4:1-18

A supernatural dream and men unburned by raging flames had convinced Nebuchadnezzar of God's unique power. But there was still something missing: a humble response. Nebuchadnezzar thought God was pretty great. But he still thought that he himself, as king of Babylon, was pretty great too (4:4). So God sent him another dream. Again the wise men failed to interpret the dream, even though Nebuchadnezzar actually told them what it was this time (4:6-7). Human wisdom was again worthless (Jer 9:23). So Daniel explained what the dream meant: Because of Nebuchadnezzar's great pride, God would humble him. God would cut down his pride like an axe chopping down a magnificent tree. But the band around the stump showed that God would preserve Nebuchadnezzar's rule, for the stump would one day sprout again (Dan 4:26). What was the purpose of the king's humiliation? To demonstrate that God is **sovereign**. He rules over all, including over the kingdoms of man (Isa 40:22-24). He bestows these kingdoms on whomever He wishes (4:17), so no one, not even great Nebuchadnezzar, should boast.

ASK

1. Who tried (and failed) to interpret the king's dream before Daniel was called?
All the wise men of Babylon (the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans, and diviners).
2. What was the dream about?
A large tree that provided for the animals of the world was chopped down..
3. Would the tree be completely destroyed?
No. Its stump would be protected.

DISCUSS

1. God is kind: He showed Nebuchadnezzar a third sign after he was not humbled by the first two. What has God revealed to you to humble you before Him? How have you responded?
2. Ask your parents to help you identify any pride in your life. Are you humble enough to listen to what they say? Is it worth letting go of that pride? What does God do to the proud (Isa 13:11)?

DAY 2

God warned Nebuchadnezzar about his pride • Daniel 4:19–27

READ

Daniel 4:19–27

EXPLAIN

The truth of Daniel 4:19–27

Getting chopped down does not feel good. Daniel was so troubled that he begged the king to respond rightly to the dream's interpretation. He urged the king to **repent, turning away from his sin**, and to show his repentance by showing mercy (4:27). Daniel urged this because he knew pride brings great destruction. Adam and Eve brought a curse on all creation when they proudly sought wisdom apart from God (Gen 3:6). The people at Babel were scattered and confused when they proudly sought a name for themselves (11:4). Pharaoh's kingdom was crushed when he proudly resisted God (Exod 12:29–30). Korah was swallowed up by the earth when he proudly challenged Moses (Num 16). Samson lost his sight when he proudly trusted in his own strength (Judg 16). Goliath suffered a shocking defeat when he proudly mocked God's people (1 Sam 17). Saul lost his kingdom, the Spirit, and his life by proudly pursuing his own will instead of obeying God's word (1 Sam 13:14). Be warned: pride leads to destruction (Prov 16:18).

ASK

1. How did Daniel respond to the dream?
He was troubled. Daniel cared about Nebuchadnezzar.
2. After interpreting the dream, what did Daniel tell Nebuchadnezzar to do?
To repent: to stop sinning and practice righteousness.
3. Why was all this going to happen to Nebuchadnezzar?
To show everyone that it is God who rules. .
4. What other biblical characters were devastated because of their pride?
Adam and Eve, the people at Babel, Pharaoh, Korah, Samson, Goliath, and Saul.

DISCUSS

1. What does God think about pride (Prov 6:16–19)? Can this apply even to “good” people who believe in God (Luke 18:10–14)? Is this a danger for you?
2. Have you ever suffered or been humiliated because of your own pride?

DAY 3

God humbled Nebuchadnezzar through His judgment • Daniel 4:28–37

READ

Daniel 4:28–37

EXPLAIN

The truth of Daniel 4:28–37

It had been a year since the dream. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten. Maybe he thought it was only a bad dream, not a message from God. Either way, a year later he ignored the dream's message and boasted about his own power and glory (Dan 4:30). So God immediately made his mind like an animal's. Can you imagine if that happened to you? Nebuchadnezzar traded his palace for a field,

his officials for cattle, his banquets for grass, his rich robes for hair matted like eagles' feathers, and his elegance for nails overgrown and blackened like birds' claws (4:33). Nebuchadnezzar's proud head hung in disgrace. But after seven years, he looked to heaven, admitting that God was Might and he was not. So God graciously restored his understanding, just as He had promised. Nebuchadnezzar was thankful, not bitter, over his suffering, because God's discipline had rescued him from his own terrible pride. So Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed the message for all to hear: God humbles everyone who is proud (4:37).

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. Did the king humble himself before God?
No. He boasted about all that he had done.
2. What happened to the king?
Nebuchadnezzar's mind became like an animal's. His hair became matted like eagles' feathers. His nails became overgrown, and he ate grass like a beast.
3. Did Nebuchadnezzar stay that way?
No. After seven years, he humbly looked to heaven, and God restored him as promised.

DISCUSS 

1. You don't need to be a king in order to boast about yourself. How are you tempted to honor yourself with the glory that belongs only to God?
2. How long does it take you to admit that you are wrong? When your pride is humbled, are you thankful or upset?

DAY 4*Faith like a child • Matthew 18:1–4***READ** 

Matthew 18:1–4

EXPLAIN **The truth of Matthew 18:1–4**

Humility is so important because it is the attitude of faith. To have faith, you must be humble. You must see your weakness, your inability to save yourself, and your desperate need for Jesus. You must be like a little child (Matt 18:3). In other words, you must be dependent, as an infant depends wholly on its mother with nothing of its own to offer. So you must realize that you are weak, and helpless, and all you can do is trust, looking to Jesus to supply all your needs. When Jesus said this, the disciples had been arguing about which one of them was the greatest (cf. Mark 9:34; Luke 9:46). But they had it all wrong. It is not the super spiritual but the poor in spirit who are blessed (Matt 5:3). It is not those who think they are righteous, but those who hunger and thirst for righteousness who are blessed (5:6). So give up your pride. It might hurt to do it, but it is worth it. When you look to Christ as your only hope, then His blessing will overwhelm you with grace you could never earn.

ASK 

1. What must you become like to enter Christ's kingdom?
Like a little child.
2. In what way must you become like a little child?
Humble, dependent, like an infant who trusts his parents to provide and is unable to survive on his own.
3. Why is humility so good?
Because the humble heart is empty and ready to receive the grace of Christ.

DISCUSS 

1. How do your parents provide for you? How does God provide for His children?
2. Why are the proud excluded from God's kingdom? Is there sin in your life that you are too proud to confess? Now is a good time to humble yourself, confess, and enjoy forgiveness.

DAY 5

Jesus washes the disciples' feet • John 13:1-5

READ

John 13:1-5

EXPLAIN

The truth of John 13:1-5

If you knew you had just one day left to live, how would you spend it? Jesus spent it serving his disciples. He humbly began to wash the disciples' feet (John 13:1, 5). To those seated around Him, this was unthinkable humiliation. This was a job done by the lowest ranking slave, not the honored guest. It was not even something the disciples considered doing for each other, for, as Luke points out, they were too busy arguing about who was the greatest (Luke 22:24). Yet Jesus took the position of the lowest slave in order to show what true love looks like. He did in spite of Judas' coming betrayal and His own coming suffering and death (John 13:2-3). At the time when you might expect the disciples to be caring for the needs of their Master, Jesus set aside His needs and concerns in order to care for theirs. In so doing, He loved "his own...to the end" (13:1). He loved his disciples to with full and perfect love. If you are a follower of Jesus, you should be marked by this same kind of humble, selfless love.

ASK

1. What did Jesus do for His disciples?
He washed their feet.
2. When did He do this?
The day before He died on the cross.
3. Why were the disciples shocked when Jesus began to wash their feet?
Washing feet was something done by the lowest ranking slave.
4. Why did Jesus wash His disciples' feet?
To show that love is humble and selfless.

DISCUSS

1. Why do you do good things for others? Because you care for them and want to serve them, or because you hoped that you will be noticed? What can you do this week to show selfless love to your family or friends?
2. Your failure to love condemns you. But what has Christ's selfless love accomplished for you to remove your guilt (Phil 2:5-8)?

NEXT WEEK

God judges Belshazzar for his pride

Daniel 5:1-31

