



STANDING STRONG IN TRYING TIMES

The Book of Daniel

Humbling the Proud

Key idea:

God is Sovereign over the world, both nations and individuals, and is able to humble the proud and exalt the humble.

Key text:

Daniel 4 (Daniel 4:1–3, 34–37)

King Nebuchadnezzar, To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world: May you prosper greatly! ² It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. ³ How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.

³⁴ At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. ³⁵ All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?” ³⁶ At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Key points:

1. Nebuchadnezzar was at peace and prospering but had a troubling dream of a massive tree that was cut down to a stump, and a warning that someone was to have their mind changed to that of an animal for a period of time so that they would be driven from human society until they acknowledged that God was Sovereign.
2. Daniel interpreted the dream to show that the tree represented Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful monarch in the world. But he was being judged for his pride and would be given the mind of an animal so that he would lose power until he humbled himself and acknowledged the Sovereignty of God.

3. Daniel said that Nebuchadnezzar would eventually be restored to his right mind and to his throne, and he urged him to repent of his pride and help the oppressed so that the judgment might not fall on him.
4. A year after the dream Nebuchadnezzar uttered proud words and was immediately judged, exactly as the dream had warned.
5. After a period of time, Nebuchadnezzar repented of his sin and humbly acknowledged that God Sovereignly ruled over all. He was restored to his former position and gave public praise to God.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. How are the events in Daniel 4 similar to the events in Daniel 2? How are they different?
3. Given the previous experiences of chapters 2 and 3, and Nebuchadnezzar's obvious esteem for Daniel, how do I expect him to respond to the dream? Had God given sufficient proof to Nebuchadnezzar to verify the danger he faced?
4. Why did God punish Nebuchadnezzar with a mental illness that made him act like a beast? Why is this an appropriate judgment for his sin of pride?
5. Does the dream give any hope of avoiding the coming judgment? Why does Daniel advise Nebuchadnezzar to repent of his sin? Can I think of other biblical examples similar to this? What does this tell me about God's warnings of judgment?
6. What reasons could Nebuchadnezzar give for his pride? What accomplishments might he point to as a basis for his pride? Why are these not a basis for pride according to God? Is there ever a basis for human pride? Why or why not?
7. How is Nebuchadnezzar an antitype (an opposite picture) to Christ?
8. When I read his words in Daniel 4:1-3, 34-37 what do I think about Nebuchadnezzar? How different does he seem to be by the end of the events described in Daniel 4 from what he was like in the earlier chapters? What does this tell me about God's ability to humble and draw people to Himself?
9. Do I have faith to believe that God could work this way in the lives of people today? In the lives of government leaders? In the lives of my family and friends?
10. Is there an area where God is revealing pride in my life? How can I respond to the Spirit's work to root out pride and establish humility in this area?

11. Who will I call or see to encourage this week?

For Further Study:

[Pride](#) (February 11, 2018)

[The Humility of the Wise](#) (November 19, 2006)

[Jesus Christ - The Supreme Example of Humility](#) (February 24, 2008)

[The Way - Trusting In God's Sovereignty](#) (May 30, 2021)

[God's Sovereignty Over Human History](#) (July 5, 2009)

[My Only Comfort - Part 2](#) (May 10, 2020)

Preview of next week: Born By Grace (John 3:1-15)