

A PROUD KING MADE HUMBLE

Daniel 4:1-37.

LESSON 140 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: "God resisteth the proud" (I Peter 5:5).

BIBLE TEXT

Daniel 4:1-37

1 ¶ Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

2 I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.

3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

4 ¶ I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace:

5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

6 Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.

7 Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

8 But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying,

9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

10 Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.

11 The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

12 The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it,

and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;

14 He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

15 Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:

16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.

17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

18 This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

19 ¶ Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

20 The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto

the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;

21 Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:

22 It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

23 And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;

24 This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

28 ¶ All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house

of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

34 ¶ And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

A Strange Dream

One night as King Nebuchadnezzar lay asleep in his palace at Babylon, he had a strange dream. He saw a great tree, so tall and wide that it could be seen in all the earth. Its pretty leaves turned and fluttered in the breeze, and fruit was everywhere on its branches. Cows and horses and all kinds of animals stood in the shade of this big tree, and birds made their nests

in it – perhaps red-breasted robins and little brown sparrows and many other kinds of birds were there. There was so much fruit on this tree that everybody could have some.

Then an Holy One — perhaps the Lord Himself — came down from Heaven and cried aloud that this beautiful tree should be cut down. The stump of the tree was to be left in the tender grass of the field where it would be wet with dew, and a band of iron and brass was to be put around it. The Holy One from Heaven spoke of a man who would live with the beasts of the field for seven years, until everybody knew that God was greater than any king in all the earth. King Nebuchadnezzar thought he was big and important, and did not want to believe that God was greater than he.

The King Troubled

The king was troubled about this dream. Perhaps he thought maybe he was the one who would have to live with the animals. Anyway, he wanted very much to know what the dream meant. He asked all the wise men of Babylon about it, but none of them could tell him. God had given this dream to King Nebuchadnezzar, and the wise men of Babylon did not love God and pray to Him, so of course they could not tell what the dream meant. Finally the king told the dream to Daniel.

Daniel was probably the wisest man in all Babylon. He prayed three times a day and read the Bible and always did what he knew was right. Daniel did not want other people to have a hard time and be unhappy, so he did not want to tell the king that the dream meant that something bad was going to happen to him; but that was the way it was, and Daniel never, never told anything but the truth.

The Meaning

The king was much like this great tree. He ruled over many of the people of the world at that time. He helped the people and the animals in his kingdom, very much as this tree in the dream gave shade and fruit to all. But his heart was black and hard, and he thought he was big and important, and just as the tree was cut down and only the stump left, so the king was going to leave his palace and live with the animals in the field. But when he knew he could not do anything without God's help and learned to be thankful to God for the beautiful city of Babylon and his good and wide kingdom, then he would go back to his lovely palace and the people of his kingdom would be glad.

God's Love and Power

God loved Nebuchadnezzar, just as He loves everyone in all the world. He knew Nebuchadnezzar was a good king in many ways; and if he would only pray and be saved, he could do even more to make the people of his kingdom happy, and he could go to live with God in Heaven forever and ever when it came time for him to leave this earth.

King Nebuchadnezzar knew God was mighty and strong. No doubt he had heard that, many years before, God had made the water of the Red Sea stand like a wall while the Children of Israel walked across the bottom of the sea on dry ground, and that God had chased the giants out of the Land of Canaan so the Israelites might live safely in the land that flowed with milk and honey. And he knew that God helped Daniel to be wise, because when he was troubled about another dream, and had even forgotten what it was, God had showed Daniel what the dream was and what it meant, and Daniel had said to the king, "This secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living," but "there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets." So Nebuchadnezzar knew that God was still doing miracles. But he was proud. He thought so much of himself that there was not room in his heart to love and honour God.

Daniel felt sorry for the king, so he urged him to repent of his sins — to stop doing wrong things and begin to do right things. Daniel believed that if the king loved and obeyed God he would not have to leave his home and friends to live with the animals.

Proud and Fallen Down

A year went by and still Nebuchadnezzar did not give his heart to God. He made his heart hard against God and became more proud and haughty. One day as he walked in his lovely palace, perhaps he looked out at the big temples, the bridges across the river that ran through Babylon, and the wall that guarded the city round about. The beautiful hanging gardens were

nearby — a brick building with great steps running along each of the four sides, and flowers, shrubs, and trees covering each of the steps. And no doubt thinking of the many people who looked up to him as an important man, he said, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built . . . by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty?”

Then the dream came true – Nebuchadnezzar lost his mind and was driven out to live with the animals until his hair grew like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws.

Humbled and Lifted Up

After seven years God gave him a good mind again. He had learned to be humble and thankful to God. He did not believe that he was big and important any more, but he knew that God ruled in all the earth. His beautiful words of thanksgiving and praise to God are written in the Bible so that we may read them today. “I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, . . . and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, . . . I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven.”

His friends and servants and the people of his kingdom were glad to have him as their king again, and he may have lived happily in Babylon until he died an old, old man.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was the king who dreamed about a big tree? Daniel 4:4, 5.
2. Who told him what the dream meant? Daniel 4:19.
3. Why was Daniel probably the wisest man in Babylon? Daniel 6:10.
4. What did Daniel tell the king to do? Daniel 4:27.
5. What did the king’s sickness and trouble cause him to do? Daniel 4:34, 37.

LESSON RESOURCES

TOPIC

A PROUD KING MADE HUMBLE

Lesson 140

Daniel 4:1-37

MUSIC

Teach Me, Oh My Lord Above

WATCH & PRAY 48

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m: d: s: t: l: d': t:-

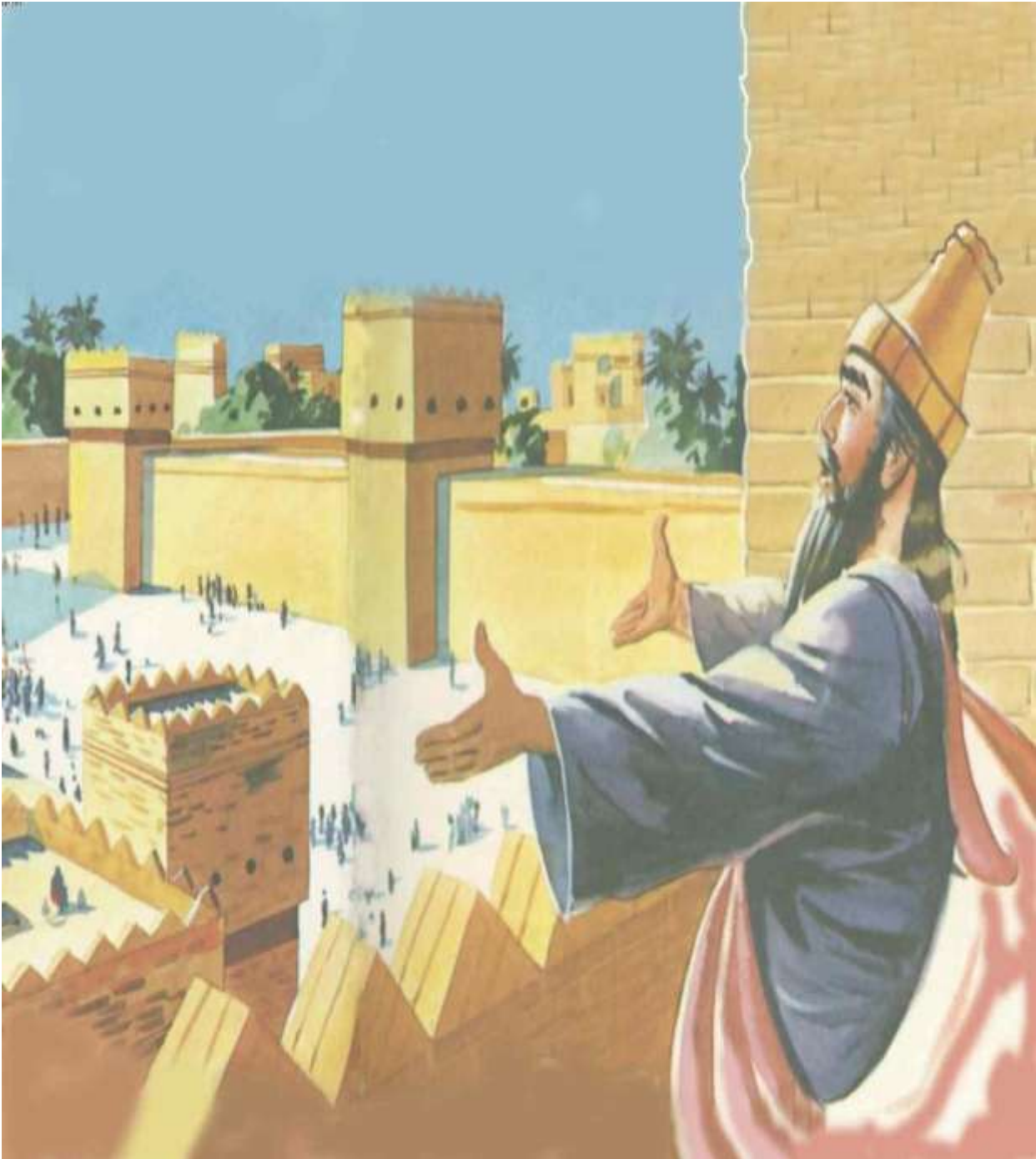
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SONG

Teach Me, Oh My Lord Above

Teach me, oh my Lord above
Great obedience to Thy Word
Which teaches that I should love?
Him who first gave me His love.

PICTURE 1



PICTURE 2

