

Studies in Daniel: Lesson Four

Daniel 4:1-37

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Pride Comes Before the Fall

In Daniel Chapter Four we are introduced to a most unusual lesson in humility. As Nebuchadnezzar surveys the kingdom he believes he has built by his own brilliance and power he receives a warning from God. Temporarily humbled, he soon forgets God's warning and returns to self-aggrandizement and haughty pride. The consequences are both devastating and humbling.

- I. The Story of Nebuchadnezzar's Fall
 - A. The dream
 - B. The failure of the magicians
 - C. The success and reluctance of Daniel

- II. God's Restoring Grace & Nebuchadnezzar's Humble Recognition
 - A. Nebuchadnezzar is given grace to change: be righteous and care for the poor (4:27)
 - B. After a year the dream comes true (4:30-33)

- III. The Inner Thoughts of a Proudful Heart
 - A. We are inclined to view our accomplishments as our own doing (Psalm 36:1-4, Prov 3:1-8)
 - B. What do we have that we have not received (I Cor 4:6-7)

- IV. The Damage Caused by a Proudful Heart
 - A. Damage to our family if we believe we are always right—it destroys relationship
 - B. Damage to our colleagues because our secret thoughts are revealed in our actions
 - C. Damage by leadership because we develop a sense of entitlement; we fail to recognize the support and contribution others have made to help our success

- V. The Universality of Pride in Its Many Forms
 - A. Arrogance—we act haughty and self-righteous, justifying our actions
 - B. Narcissism—we believe we are smarter and better than everyone else and see ourselves as deserving the focus of attention and entitled to whatever we want, including the "ownership" of our family; our spouse in particular
 - C. Self-loathing—This may not look like pride, but it actually is: it is pride in reverse believing that we are the center of everyone's attention. Do not think more highly of yourself than you OUGHT to think (Rom 12:3). We all have worth and value before God, and we have aptitudes and spiritual gifts . . . just step up to the plate and do your job without expecting recognition or thanks!

- VI. The Deliverance Offered by a Humble Savior
 - A. Do nothing out of selfishness or empty conceit (Phil 2:3-7)
 - B. The ground is level at the foot of the cross; salvation brings broken humility