

returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; ³⁵ all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?” ³⁶ At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble. (DN 4.34-37)

BABYLON/Nebuchadnezzar/Converted?

PV 16.19-25 ~ It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud. ²⁰ Whoever gives thought to the word will discover good, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord. ²¹ The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness. ²² Good sense is a fountain of life to him who has it, but the instruction of fools is folly. ²³ The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips. ²⁴ Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body. ²⁵ There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

CONCLUSION (DN 4.1-3)

DN 4.1-3 ~ King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! ² It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. ³ How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Ultimately, we see in Nebuchadnezzar a man caught up in his own self-assessment. He couldn't believe that God could actually mean what He said. He couldn't believe that he, of all people, would suffer for his pride! But, Daniel quickly disabuses him of this notion: God had presented this vision to him as a **warning**. One that, sadly, the king would **fail** to heed. And so, as a result, the king faced **the judgment of God**. Much like a lion consumes its prey, the pride of Nebuchadnezzar had consumed him.

PV 16.26-33 ~ A worker's appetite works for him; his mouth urges him on. ²⁷ A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire. ²⁸ A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends. ²⁹ A man of violence entices his neighbor and leads him in a way that is not good. ³⁰ Whoever winks his eyes plans dishonest things; he who purses his lips brings evil to pass. ³¹ Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life. ³² Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city. ³³ The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.

But unlike so many people today, the king tossed off his pride! He accepted the judgment of God and **changed**! And as a result, his words here are recorded for all history! He finds, then, his place in history not just as the king of a great nation, but a powerful king who submits to the power of God!

JS 4.6-10 ~ But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

INVITATION

#563 [OT-MnPrf]

04/15/2024

Foolish Pride

PC ___ Pchd

DN 4.1-37

QUESTION: How does God react to pride?

TRN TO DN 4

INTRODUCTION

LANGUAGE/Etymology/Lion's Pride

It's fitting. Even today: when we think of the personification of “**pride**”, our natural connection is the lion. We think of the male sitting, regally, overlooking the land. I've seen many a man who imitates this bearing in the real world!

Yet, while we often find ourselves casting our eyes to the horizon, watching for dangers and interlopers, in most cases, we find our destruction comes from within. It's much like Christ, Himself stated in **MK 7**: *And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, **pride**, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”* (**MK 7.20-22**) In truth, destruction more often comes from within—we spend so much of our lives building the structure of our lives only to bring about or own destruction! And as we look to **DN 4**, we see that this character trait is not unique to the modern American!

BACKGROUND - A Confusing Warning: The King's Dream (DN 4.4-18):

ILL—Branson Bathrooms (loved going to different shows; my dad and I would go and check all the bathrooms; the nicest: gold-inlaid toilets, solid ebony stalls from floor to ceiling; fountain and crystal lights) Never has something so ornate been used for something so...icky. But those ornate fixtures were there as a sign of wealth and pride—the kinds of things you'd previously see in the home of a king!

BKGRND: The king was resting in his home—I picture him in the most ornate bed in the most ornate living quarters in the most ornate palace available at the time. But then, he awoke, frightened, at the content of his dreams: *So 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. ⁷ Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation.* (**DN 4.6-7**)

Whatever would he do? In comes Daniel, and the king shares the dream:

DN 4.10b-18 ~ I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. ¹¹ The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. ¹² Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it. ¹³ “I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. ¹⁴ He proclaimed aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. ¹⁶ Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. ¹⁷ The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.’

BKGRND: What oh what could this dream mean?! It's obvious to us. It really is one of the most obvious dreams God's ever given to a man! I think Nebuchadnezzar knew what it meant. But he couldn't accept it!

PV 16.1-3 ~ *The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. ² All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit. ³ Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.*

AP: He knew what God was saying, but he couldn't believe it. He was God's chosen instrument—the king of Babylon! **God wouldn't judge him, would he?**

In Nebuchadnezzar, we see what happens when man revolts against God: what happens when pride rules—and so would Nebuchadnezzar, himself.

BD1: A Loving Explanation: The King's Warning (DN 4.19-27)

ILL—Gag Reflex (if you try swallowing something too large, you instantly react; your body tries to force it out—why? Because it recognizes instinctively that it's damaging—that it's too big to be healthy) *Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. (DN 4.19a)* As Daniel hears the dream of the king, he instinctively recoils—he sees the king's pride large as life, and he realizes the danger that is to come!

BABYLON/Nebuchadnezzar/His Influence on History

But part of what amazes me is how Daniel warns against Nebuchadnezzar's sin. *"My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies! (DN 4.19b)* He's saddened by the idea of the punishment coming upon the king—he looks at all the good he's done—*whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived—²² it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. (DN 4.21b-22)* He thinks of all the good the king has done and doesn't view him as a worthless pagan—but rather, as a good man who'd done good things, but was headed for a terrible fate. And so, Daniel provides **the king a warning**.

DN 4.27 ~ *Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity."*

AP: We can be prideful about the pride of other people—quick to engage our gag reflex at pride we see around us. But look at the reaction of Daniel—he was a servant of the king, his people were captives against their will—yet, Daniel saw the good in a broken man. And he sought for him to awake to righteousness and repent:

PV 16.4-5 ~ *The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble. ⁵ Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished.*

BD2: A Decision of Rejection: The King's Failure (DN 4.28-30)

ILL—Unheeded Advice (nothing more frustrating; you see the disaster coming, but no one listens, and you end up sitting there, watching them heading heedlessly towards disaster) In the case of Nebuchadnezzar, he hears the warning of Daniel, but he doesn't heed it. And so, *At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰ and the king answered and said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" (DN 4.29-30)*

BABYLON/Hanging Gardens of Babylon/History

EX: I can't help but picture Nebuchadnezzar, looking out at the city. I imagine him looking out at the hanging garden in awe, wonder, and unfortunately, pride.

Ultimately, the issue wasn't that he was impressed by all he saw and all he had: it was that he thought of himself as the source of all of it!

AP: Today, we can fall into the same mistake. We look at our wealth, our possessions, our gifts, and our abilities, and our faith becomes in ourselves and our things and not in the God who gave us these things.

PV 16.6-12 ~ *By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one turns away from evil. ⁷ When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. ⁸ Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice. ⁹ The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps. ¹⁰ An oracle is on the lips of a king; his mouth does not sin in judgment. ¹¹ A just balance and scales are the Lord's; all the weights in the bag are his work. ¹² It is an abomination to kings to do evil, for the throne is established by righteousness.*

BD3: A Terrible Consequence: The King's Judgment (DN 4.31-33)

ILL—King of the Hill (when a kid, loved playing the game; no matter how good we thought we were, we'd eventually fall) And in truth, that's how it is to live in this life. We rise, we begin to feel too highly of ourselves, and then, we fall. We see that as individuals, as a group, as a nation—ultimately, we see in Nebuchadnezzar a pattern of **the terrible consequence of pride in the king's judgment**.

DN 4.31-33 ~ *While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, ³² and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." ³³ Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar: He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.*

BABYLON/Nebuchadnezzar/Archaeological Evidence for Illness

AP: We see here that Nebuchadnezzar faced terrible consequences for his pride—and honestly, more often than not, this is the one way to affect a prideful person. Due to their self confidence and assuredness, they have no clear path out of it. All they see is themselves as the victors of the game of life. So, the only way out of pride is through humility. And that's true for us, today, as well.

PV 11.2 ~ *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.*

PV 16.13-18 ~ *Righteous lips are the delight of a king, and he loves him who speaks what is right. ¹⁴ A king's wrath is a messenger of death, and a wise man will appease it. ¹⁵ In the light of a king's face there is life, and his favor is like the clouds that bring the spring rain. ¹⁶ How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver. ¹⁷ The highway of the upright turns aside from evil; whoever guards his way preserves his life. ¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*

BD4: A Beautiful Redemption: The King's Change (DN 4.34-37)

ILL—When I Punish My Dogs (natural reaction: they hunker down, ears back, and tail between their legs) And that's exactly what we see with Nebuchadnezzar, here: *At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason*