CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
AUGUST 24 2024

Scripture Story: Daniel 4.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 42.

humility check



Photo by Jacqui Janetzko

flashlight

"God's purpose that the greatest kingdom in the world should show forth His praise was now fulfilled. This public proclamation, in which Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the mercy and goodness and authority of God, was the last act of his life recorded in sacred history" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 521).

keytext

"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."

(Daniel 4:37, NIV)

what do you think?

Rank the following:

Which person do you think would have the hardest time being humble (1 hardest, 5 the least)? Why?

____ president or leader of a country
____ famous movie star
____ champion athlete
____ Nobel Peace Prize winner
____ business tycoon
____ a person called by God to do a special work for Him by serving others

did you know?

The word "Babylon" means "the gate of God." One of the things Babylon is famous for was its legendary hanging gardens during Nebuchadnezzar's reign. While no one has any evidence of the hanging gardens, the folklore describes gardens that were suspended in such a way that it looked as if the plants and vines were virtually floating.

INTO THE STORY

"I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. . . . [For a detailed description of the dream and interpretation, read Daniel 4:6-27.]

"All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, 'Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?'

"Even as the words were on his lips, a voice came from heaven, 'This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes.'

"Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

"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.
All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing.
He does as he pleases with the power of heaven and the peoples of the earth.
No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'

"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. 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."

(Daniel 4:4, 5, 28-37, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What words and themes seem to be repeated in this passage?

_____

As you read this story, *highlight* what you think is the key thought in this passage and why.

Underline all of the words Nebuchadnezzar used to describe himself through this experience (good and bad).

Read Daniel 4:10-18 and list the specific points of the king's dream. Write what you think each part means.

_____

_____

How does Daniel respond to the king's request and the meaning of the king's dream?

_____

What other stories in Scripture does this event remind you of, and why? How are they similar and how are they different?

_____

What one word would you use to describe the essence of this story? Why?

_____

What do you think is the message in this story for:
Leaders? _____
Believers? _____
Young people today? _____

In what ways do you see God's mercy and grace revealed in this story?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

punch lines

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" **(1 Peter 5:6, NIV).**

"He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble" **(Luke 1:52, NIV).**

"The LORD . . . planned it, to bring down her pride in all her splendor and to humble all who are renowned on the earth" **(Isaiah 23:9, NIV).**

"For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory" **(Psalm 149:4, NIV).**

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" **(Matthew 5:5, NIV).**

further insight

"A Christian reveals true humility by showing the gentleness of Christ, by being always ready to help others, by speaking kind words and performing unselfish acts, which elevate and ennoble the most sacred message that has come to our world."—Ellen G. White, *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, p. 74

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Luke 7:1-10.

Read and respond to the *What Do You Think?* activity, and reflect on what Jesus said about the centurion in today's Bible verses. While the centurion is not the leader of an entire empire, he might be tempted to be self-absorbed about his authority. Examine the centurion's viewpoint on authority and imagine how Nebuchadnezzar's story might be different if he had the same spirit as the centurion.

Sunday

Read Luke 1:52.

Get *Into the Story* this week by answering the questions in the *Out of the Story* section in this lesson. If you are reading this story for the first time, what about this passage impressed you the most? Why? If you have read this story before, what new insights did you get out of the passage? It was traditional to record only good things about yourself that would be remembered in history, but Nebuchadnezzar immortalizes this seemingly embarrassing event in Scripture. In your own words, what lesson do you think Nebuchadnezzar learned?

Monday

Read Daniel 4:37.

Read the *Key Text* in this week's lesson. Think of a time in your life when this statement that the king makes would have been easy for you to say. Also, think of a season in your experience when this verse would be very difficult to say. Memorize this passage or write it down where you will see it often. But in place of Nebuchadnezzar, put your own name to personalize the passage to you.

Tuesday

Read James 1:17.

Read the *Flashlight* quote from *Prophets and Kings*. Clearly, God's purpose is not to break down great kingdoms but simply to get them to recognize that every good gift comes from Him! Throughout history, God has blessed great kings such as Nebuchadnezzar, whether they are pagan or believers. But notice the last line in this quote: "This public proclamation . . . was the last act of his life recorded in sacred history." If it were to be recorded for all to read, what would you want your last and final testimony to be?

Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines* for this week and find the passage that is speaking to your heart today. Perhaps you have aspired to greatness at times and need to be reminded that while God's desire is that you become great, you always remember what true greatness is. In light of these passages, how would you define true greatness? Think about someone you know who is great, but also humble, and say a prayer of thanks for them today.

Thursday

Read 1 Peter 5:6.

Nebuchadnezzar's lesson in humility taught a lesson to the king: Humble yourself or be humbled. Think about an area of your life that you are really confident about. Practice humility by asking someone else for advice or instruction in an area of your strength.

Area of strength:

Advice given:

Friday

Read Micah 6:8.

Take time to reflect on God's patient work to bring Nebuchadnezzar to the truth about who he was and who God is. The same God, who loves each one earnestly, works to bless His children with both struggles and success to teach that His kingdom is eternal. Scan through your experience and consider how God has led you to a knowledge of His rule.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 42.

**Royalty and Ruin* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.