

## Life Lesson 108

### Nebuchadnezzar's Lesson

Text: Daniel 4

#### Introduction

Have you ever had a bad dream – one so awful you were almost afraid to go back to sleep? Our story today is about a proud king who had a very bad dream. Our dreams are usually silly. That is because they are just the thoughts of a corner of our minds while most of our brains are resting. Long ago, though, God would use dreams and visions to tell people things He wanted them to know. God rarely uses those kinds of dreams and visions now, because now we have the complete Bible. God has already told us in His Word all the things He wants us to know. But, in the days before the Bible was completely written down, God would speak to people often through dreams.

#### The Story

King Nebuchadnezzar had received more than one dream from God. When he woke up from one especially frightening one, he called his wise men to tell him what it meant. None of them could figure it out, so he called Daniel to interpret it.

“Daniel,” the king said, “I have had a terrible dream. It was about a tree. This tree was huge and strong. It was so tall that people all over the world could look up and see it. It had thick leaves and beautiful fruit. The animals lived under its shelter and the birds lived in its branches.”

“I dreamed that a watcher came down from heaven and said, ‘Cut down the tree and cut off its branches. Shade off the leaves and scatter the fruit. Let the animals and birds get away from it. Leave only the stump in the earth with a band of iron and brass around it. Let his heart be changed from a man’s and let a beast’s heart rule him.’”

When Daniel heard this dream, he was astonished and troubled. He dreaded telling the king what the dream meant, but he bravely spoke what the Lord told him.

“This dream is one that your enemies will like,” Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar. “That wonderful tree you saw in your dream is you. You are the greatest king on earth, and your dominion reaches to the entire world. You saw a watcher coming down from heaven calling for the tree to be chopped down. That means that God will take away your kingdom from you and will make you to be like a beast. You will eat grass and live like an animal. When seven times shall pass over you, you will know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men. He will bring into power whomever He chooses.”

“Since God has given you this warning,” Daniel continued, “why do not you repent and quit sinning against God? Do what is right, and this terrible thing might not come to pass.”

Would not you think that this warning should have been sufficient? God had told the King exactly what would happen as a result of his sin. Surely that warning of terrible things to come would have been enough to cause the king to repent and change his ways.

Just a year later, King Nebuchadnezzar was walking in his beautiful palace, thinking of his mighty kingdom. “Look at this mighty kingdom I have built,” he said. “It was by my power that I created it, and for the honor of my majesty.”

Nebuchadnezzar had not listened to God’s warning. He was lifted up with pride, thinking that he alone was responsible for his greatness and the greatness of his kingdom. He had done it himself, he thought, for himself and his own glory. He had forgotten about God, and thought that he was God.

While the words were still in Nebuchadnezzar’s mouth, a voice came from heaven saying, “The kingdom is taken away from you. They shall drive you away from people and you will live with the beasts and eat grass like an ox. Seven times will pass over you until you know that it is God who rules in the kingdom of men, and He gives power to whomever He wills.”

That same hour it happened! He went crazy, and the people drove him out of the city. He acted just like an animal and ate grass. He was wet with dew from sleeping outside, and his hair and beard came to look like eagles feathers and his nails looked like bird claws. What a come-down from ruler of the greatest kingdom on earth, to a crazy man, eating grass and looking like a huge bird!

The time foretold by God passed, and Nebuchadnezzar lifted his eyes to heaven, and his reason returned to him. The kingdom was returned to him, and all was as before he had the terrible experience. Well, almost as before. Nebuchadnezzar had learned an important lesson from his experience.

“Now, I, Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven,” he announced. “God’s ways are true and right. He is able to abase those who walk in pride.”

### The Life Lesson

God hated pride so much that he sent a horrible judgment to Nebuchadnezzar so that he would learn to give God the glory He deserves. Do you think God likes pride any better today? I doubt that any of you will be turned into animals, but I do not doubt that God will deal with you if you allow pride into your life.

Pride is taking the credit for what God and others have enabled us to do. Should you be vain because you are nice looking? Because you are smart? Because you are good at sports? No, God made you. He deserves the credit for your looks and your brains. He is the one who gave you your talents and abilities. We should thank Him for what He has done for us – and remember we are not God – He is the Most High, the King of heaven and earth, and of our lives.

## Review Questions

What was King Nebuchadnezzar's dream about?

*About a huge tree that was cut down to a stump.*

What did the dream mean?

*The king would go crazy and lose his kingdom because of his great pride.*

Did the king listen to Daniel and change his ways?

*No, he was proud and thought he was powerful, like a god.*

What happened to the prideful king?

*He went crazy and acted like an animal. He was driven from the city and ate grass like an animal.*

Did he stay crazy all his life?

*No, he came to his senses, and was restored to his kingdom.*

Does God want you to be proud?

*No we should know that all our talents and abilities come from God.*