

OUR GOD REIGNS – p. 6

“Achievement or Gift?”

Daniel 4 pt 2

A Story of Conversion

Last week we looked at a conversion story –

-The proud, pagan King Nebuchadnezzar is humbled by God and becomes a worshipper of the God of Israel.

The last verse is a great summary and is the key to this message – I want to work through it backwards –

-v. 37b – *“...and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.”*

-v. 37a – *“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just...”*

The Message

God humbles the proud in order to make them true worshippers.

Another way to see it –

-God must empty you of you before He can fill you with Himself.

-You can't be full of you and filled with the Spirit –

-You can't be full of you and filled with the likeness of Christ!

God empties you in order to fill you – To fill you with what is infinitely satisfying and eternally good!

1 – God is Able to Humble the Proud

The Problem of Pride –

-The Bible is clear that God hates pride and opposes the proud –

-Prov. 21:4 – *“Haughty eyes and a proud heart...produce sin.”* (NIV)

-Prov. 6:16, 17 – *“There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes...”* (Sometimes translated – “A proud look”)

-Prov. 8:13 – *“...Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.”*

-Prov. 16:5 – *“Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished.”*

-Prov. 16:18 – *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

-Prov. 29:23 – *“One's pride will bring him low...”*

-Prov. 11:2 – *“When pride comes, then comes disgrace...”*

-The Bible is full of examples of God humbling the proud –

-The young, brilliant and strong Moses thought he was ready to lead the people but had to spend 40 in the desert to get emptied of himself...

-King Saul lost his kingdom because of his pride...

-Goliath the giant was full of himself...and it didn't end well for him!

-David was full of pride and counted his great army and was humbled.

-Pride is the taproot of all sin –

-Pride is the way the first sin came into the universe as Lucifer said, “I will ascend into the heavens...I will be like the Most High!” (Isaiah 14)

-The pride of the human heart is what the serpent appealed to in the Garden that led to the fall of the human race – “...you will be like God...”

-This is what pride really is – It is man seeing himself as more than man –

-He sees himself as self-sustaining, self-righteous, self-promoting, self-controlling, and self-existent

-Only God is truly worthy of worship –

-Which is why He says, *“I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.”* (Isaiah 42:8)

-Isaiah 48:11 – *“...My glory I will not give to another.”*

How did God humble the proud Nebuchadnezzar?

- Since in pride Nebuchadnezzar made himself out to be more than a man, God will humble him by making him less than a man!
- Remember his dream?
 - Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom are illustrated by a glorious tree –
 - It was massive (reached to heaven and seen by all on the earth)
 - It was impressive (beautiful gardens)
 - It was productive (provided security for the world)
 - But it clearly goes to his head –
 - Look at vs. 29-30 – *“At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, and the king answered as 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?”*
- Pride not only sees itself as being more than human (godlike) but pride fails to see the good, gift-giving work of God!
- Pride says, “Life is by me” –
 - Look what I have done – Look at my accomplishment!
 - When life is not going good we say, “I deserve better than this!” or “I deserve more than I’m getting out of life!”
 - But here is the problem of pride –
 - It doesn’t recognize that behind and beneath all human achievement is divine grace!
 - Paul asked the Corinthians – *“What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?”* (1 Cor. 4:7)
 - Yes, you must take it and do something with it – But without the gifts, you don’t exist –
 - Acts 17:25, 28 – *“...he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything...for ‘In him we live and move and have our being...”*
 - Pride claims to be the author of what is really a gift

God deals with Nebuchadnezzar’s pride by bringing him low – making him less than human.

- He humbles him – v. 25 – *“That you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdoms of men and gives it to whom he will.”*
- Humility submits to the sovereign rule of God and recognizes the given hand of God.

2 – To Make Them True Worshippers

Why would God do this to Nebuchadnezzar?

God works to deliver us from our pride and to save us to Himself –

Notice the change in Nebuchadnezzar –

- He lifted up his eyes to heaven – v. 34
 - Before in pride he was looking down on his kingdom; now in humility he looks up to God.
- He used words like –
 - (his reason) returned vs. 34 and 36
 - (his majesty and splendor) returned v. 36
 - I was established – v. 36
 - (greatness) was added to me – v. 36