Study 05 October 7, 2012

# HUMBLED AND LIFTED UP

Daniel 4:1-37

All sin is against God and in the absolute sense; there are no "big and little" sins. Is that true? Why/why not?

Yet the Bible does seem to place emphasis on certain attitudes as being totally unacceptable. [Name some.] Cf. Proverb 8:13; 16:18; 6:16-19

Prov 8:13
The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil
and perverted speech I hate.

Prov 16:19
It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor
than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Prov 6:16-19
16 There are six things that the LORD hates,
seven that are an abomination to him:
17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,
18 a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that make haste to run to evil,
19 a false witness who breathes out lies,
and one who sows discord among brothers.

Why is pride so awful? Shouldn't you have some pride in yourself? Perhaps self-respect is a better term.

What is the difference? Pride is an inordinate self-esteem; self-respect is a realistic evaluation of self/skills.

There are two aspects of pride: the one that we see in today's lesson is the attitude of self-importance without any regard for the source of life's blessings; the other is the idea that you are exempt from the trials and tribulations that are common to all men.

## 1. THE KING'S DOXOLOGY 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.

This decree came after the dream.
"Signs" are significant in their meaning.
"Wonders" produce awe in the beholder.
Nebuchadnezzar is issuing this decree to the then known world.

## 2. THE KING'S DISTRESS 4:4-5

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. 5 I
saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my
head alarmed me.

The king thought to congratulate himself.
He had another dream that deeply troubled him.

### a) Appeal to Wise Men 4:6-7

6 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.

His advisors could not help him.

b) Appeal to Daniel 4:8-18

8 At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the
name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the
dream, saying, 9 "O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the
spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me
the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. 10 The visions of my
head as I lay in bed were these: 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.' 18 This dream
I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation,
because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the
interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you."

The king is still a polytheist (many gods) at this time (9).

He relates the dream (10). Babylon had majestic trees and the king dreamed of himself as a towering tree over the entire world.

In the Bible trees often symbolize kings and kingdoms.

God was merciful to this heathen. Although God judged him, He left open the hope of restoration. The judgment was corrective and not penal.

V 17 is important in that it explains the destiny of governments and nations through the ages until Christ returns. [Cf. Romans 13:1]

## 3. THE DREAM'S MEANING 4:19-27

19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his
thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, "Belteshazzar, let not the
dream or the interpretation alarm you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord,
may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies!
20 The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to
heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, 21 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. 23 And because the
king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop down
the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a
band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with
the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven
periods of time pass over him,' 24 this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of
the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, 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
kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. 26 And as it was commanded to leave
the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from
the time that you know that Heaven rules. 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."

Even Daniel was be astonished at what God had in store for the king.

In vs. 9, Daniel is "the chief...", and he was not anxious to give the king bad news that would encourage his enemies. What he said is an oriental way of expressing a wish for the king's well-being through the destruction of his enemies.

Nebuchadnezzar sensed Daniels's distress and urged him to get on with it. (19)

As Christians we sometimes have to bear bad news.
We can learn a lesson of tact from Daniel's reluctance to pass on bad news.

The king is going to be made insane! (24-26)

What is the opposite of a proud despot?
A brute beast that doesn't have any awareness of God or anything else.

If he was going to live as though God didn't exist, then God would arrange for him to really have his way.

It occurs to me that hell is the realization of a life lived without Christ.
If a person doesn't need Christ, they will get to spend eternity apart from Him.

Daniel (27) tells the king that he may yet avoid this judgment if he repents.

## 4. THE DREAM'S FULFILLMENT 4:28-33

28 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 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?" 31 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.

## 5. THE KING'S TESTIMONY 4:34-37

34 At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my
reason 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.

Like the prodigal son Nebuchadnezzar came to his right mind.
God is God!
Notice he said that what God does is right.

I believe that before God saves anyone He convinces them that He is indeed God and that if He sent them to hell He would be Right and Just in doing so. A person that thinks God saved them because they did something to obligate God has the pride of old Nebuchadnezzar reigning over their mind.