**Coming to Your Senses**

**Daniel 4:28-37**

**Introduction**

When a person is lifted up with pride, there is only one way he or she can go: Down. “Those that are of a haughty spirit, that think of themselves above what is meet, and look with contempt upon others, that with their pride affront God and disquiet others, will be brought down, either by repentance or by ruin” (Matthew Henry). The book of Proverbs gives this same warning: “Whenpride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly iswisdom.” (Proverbs 11:2) “Pride goethbefore destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18) “A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.” (Proverbs 29:23)

There can be many forms of pride in our lives. The famous boxer, Mohammad Ali, was once flying in an airplane. The stewardess told Mr. Ali to buckle up since the plane was about to depart. He said, “Superman doesn’t need a seatbelt!” She responded, “Superman doesn’t need an airplane. Please buckle up!” Whatever its form, you must remember that pride will bring you low. Academic pride will keep you from learning what you need to learn. Religious pride can make you dogmatic in your beliefs despite what the Bible says. Material pride tempts you to buy things you don’t need with money you don’t have to impress people you don’t even like! Social pride will keep you agitated until you have acceptance. Pride is a terrible thing because of the way it messes with your mind! In today’s lesson, we will see what God did to bring Nebuchadnezzar to his senses.

1. **After years of success, Nebuchadnezzar was living comfortably as the most powerful man of his time.** 
   1. His kingdom was secure. They were not experiencing any military invasion from any foreign power. His wealth had grown immensely. His name was respected throughout the land.
   2. His security was disturbed by another dream. God’s revelation has a way of shaking you up! He dreamed about a large tree in the midst of the earth. The animals of the field came to find shelter under the branches of the tree and the birds flocked to the tree to build their nests and find food. This was quite a tree!
   3. Things were going well for the tree until an angel came down from heaven and ordered the tree to be chopped down. The limbs were to be cut off. The leaves were to be removed. The fruit was to be plucked off every branch. It was absolutely stripped of all its glory! Only a stump remained.
   4. The angel ordered the stump of the tree to be left and protected because it would be permitted to grow again.
   5. The analogy in the dream shifted to focus on a man who would live for seven years as an animal in the wild. The indication is that he would live this way until he acknowledged that God ruled in the kingdom of men.
   6. Nebuchadnezzar did not understand the meaning of the dream, but sensed that it was not good. When the wise men proved once again to be no help, he turned to Daniel. Daniel revealed that the tree represented the king and the growth of his empire. If Nebuchadnezzar did not repent of his pride, he would be “chopped down” and reduced to living like an animal. God graciously gave him a year to repent of his pride.
2. **Despite the space to repent, the fulfillment of the dream came upon Nebuchadnezzar. (v. 28-33)**
   1. Those who are walking in pride cannot escape the judgment of God. (v. 28) It seemed like he was untouchable, but it was just a matter of time.
   2. He was most likely walking upon the roof of his palace admiring his achievements. (v. 29-30) Babylon was truly impressive. Stephen Miller records these amazing details of the city.
3. It was shaped as a huge rectangle surrounded by a broad, deep moat.
4. Beyond the moat was an elaborate system of double walls. The innermost wall was 21 ft thick with defensive towers at 60 ft intervals. The outer wall was 11 ft thick complete with additional watchtowers.
5. Beyond this system of walls was another set of walls! The inner wall of this set was 23 ft thick and the outer wall 25 ft thick. It was large enough for chariots to travel on top.
6. The height of the walls would possibly be comparable to the Ishtar Gate, at 40 ft high.
7. The Ishtar Gate opened to a 1,000-yard procession way that led to the temple of Marduk. An additional 53 temples stood within the city.
8. Adjacent to the temple was a 7-level ziggurat towering 288 ft into the air.
9. A 400 ft long bridge spanned the Euphrates River connecting the east and west.
10. Nebuchadnezzar had three palaces. His principal palace covered 350 by 200 yards containing a beautifully decorated throne room.
11. The famous “Hanging Gardens” was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. He built it for his wife, Amytis, who grew up in a mountainous region of Media. Evidently, she missed the mountains, so he built one for her! Ingenious hoists were made to raise water from the Euphrates River to the high terraces.
12. No wonder Nebuchadnezzar called it, “great Babylon.” (v. 30) As the king looked out at all this grandeur, his heart filled with pride.
    1. While he was still talking about himself and his achievements, God’s voice overpowered the king’s! (v. 31-32)
    2. It happened just like God said it would. (v. 33) He suffered a condition known today as Lycanthropy in which an individual believes himself to be an animal. In his commentary, John Waalvoord cites the testimony of Raymond Harrison who observed a mental patient demonstrating similar tendencies in a British mental hospital in 1946. Specifically, Nebuchadnezzar suffered from Boanthropy in which the person believes himself to be an ox.
13. The Peabody Institute describes the typical stages of Boanthropy. The disease manifests itself first of all by a tendency toward green vegetables and is therefore indistinguishable from vegetarianism. In the next stage, the sufferer will develop a liking for grass and some species of wildflowers. The third stage, characterized by mooing and snorting and the deep urge to plough fields, occurs only two months after symptoms first appear. This stage can last up to five years, but always results in coma and death.
14. Gleason Archer described the physical condition of the king, "His skin toughened into hide through constant exposure to outdoor weather at all seasons. The temperature in modern Iraq ranges from a high of 110 or 120 degrees Fahrenheit in summer - usually with high humidity - to a low of well below freezing in winter. Most particularly the hair of his head and his body, becoming matted and coarse, looked like eagle feathers; his fingernails and toenails, never cut, became like claws. So, the boasting king sank to a subhuman level." It is staggering to think he lived this way for seven years!
    1. After seven years, he came to his senses. (v. 34a) “It is important to note the connection here between the exercise of faith and the return of reason. While he was full of his own importance Nebuchadnezzar’s world revolved around himself. It did not strike him how unrealistic this was until he was brought low by illness. Sanity begins with a realistic self-appraisal.” (Baldwin 129).
    2. Finally, he gave proper praise to God who restored him to leadership. (v. 34b-37)
15. **Central Idea: Nebuchadnezzar came to his senses about life when he came to his senses about God.**
16. **Application: You only come to your senses about life when you come to your senses about God.** 
    1. Rather than resisting God’s sovereign rule in your life, you ought to submit to it.
    2. Rather than walking in pride, you ought to walk in humble dependence upon God.

## Continuing in pride makes no sense!

## It affects your ability to do what you are designed to do.

## You can’t fulfill your role at home, work, or church while acting like an ox!

* 1. How can you come to your senses before it gets worse?

1. Take heed to God’s warnings. Don’t delay repentance!
2. Conduct a realistic appraisal of yourself. Be reminded of just how dependent you are.
3. Kneel before the Lord and submit to Him.
4. Give God the praise He alone deserves.