



## Lesson 155

# The Humbling of King Nebuchadnezzar

### Story Elements

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Text:</b> Daniel 4:1-37</li> <li>• <b>Setting:</b> circa 600 BC, in Babylon</li> <li>• <b>Main Characters:</b> God, Daniel, and Nebuchadnezzar</li> <li>• <b>Plot:</b> Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a felled tree is fulfilled when he lives 7 years as a lunatic.</li> <li>• <b>Key word(s):</b> "the most High _____ in the kingdom of men" (vv 17, 25, &amp; 32)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Climax:</b> Daniel 4:19 <i>Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.</i></li> </ul> |
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### “Behold, a tree in the midst of the earth...”

1. (vv 1-3) This chapter is an encyclical of Nebuchadnezzar that Daniel included in his book. In it, the king addresses the subjects in his kingdom and anyone else who might read it. Verses 1-3 serve as an introduction to the letter and reveal the theme of the chapter: God's \_\_\_\_\_ rule over all things.
2. (vv 4-8) After the king was at rest (i.e., after he had made an end of conquering neighboring kingdoms) he had another troubling dream, the interpretation of which none of his counselors could give. Lastly, \_\_\_\_\_ was called to offer the king his insight.
3. (vv 9-18) Nebuchadnezzar relayed the details of his dream to Daniel:<sup>1</sup>
  - (a) The Attributes of the Tree**
    - i. He saw a great tree that filled the earth; its leaves were strong and green and its fruit was plentiful and good;
    - ii. animals found shelter beneath the great tree and birds nested in its branches;
    - iii. the tree provided sustenance for the whole \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (b) The Affliction of the Tree**
    - i. An angelic being, referred to as a \_\_\_\_\_, made a proclamation that the tree should be cut down, its branches severed, its leaves shaken, and its fruit scattered;
    - ii. but the tree's stump would remain in the ground and fitted with an iron and brass \_\_\_\_\_; the stump was to be wet with the dew of heaven and fed like the beasts of the field;
    - iii. instead of a heart of man, the heart of a beast would characterize the tree; thus it would remain for seven times (or seven \_\_\_\_\_).
    - iv. The purpose of the felling of the tree, according to the watchers, is *“to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the \_\_\_\_\_ of men.”*

### “It is thou, O king...”

4. (v 19) Daniel was so struck with the terrible meaning of the dream that he was astonished and

<sup>1</sup> As the king tells the story, he quotes himself speaking as the pagan that he was, attributing to Daniel the possession of the spirit of the holy gods. When these events occurred, Nebuchadnezzar had not yet embraced the God of the Bible as the one true God.

speechless for “one hour.”<sup>2</sup> Nebuchadnezzar encouraged Daniel to not be afraid to tell him the meaning of the dream; Daniel responded, “*My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.*”

- (a) (vv 20-27) Daniel told the king the dream's meaning: the dream was of a proclamation from God that Nebuchadnezzar would be removed from the throne by some mental illness that would make him act and live like an animal. He would be driven from society for seven years, but his kingdom would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b) All of this would be done so that Nebuchadnezzar would “*know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*”

- 5. (vv 28-33) Daniel encouraged the king to avoid calamity by bringing forth fruit unto \_\_\_\_\_, but the king persisted in his sinful pride. A year later, when his heart was lifted up, the LORD struck him down, and the dream's terrible prophecy befell him.
- 6. (vv 34-36) Seven years later, Nebuchadnezzar's mind returned to him, and in humble praise he acknowledged, “*all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his \_\_\_\_\_ in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*”

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## Applications

- 7. Daniel's “moment of silence” was indicative of great astonishment at a coming calamity. In the book of Revelation, all of \_\_\_\_\_ is silent for the space of half an hour after the seventh seal is opened – a sign of the coming of terrible calamity. (Rev. 8:1)
- 8. All through the Bible, God exalts the lowly and brings down the proud (Dan. 4:17). He does this to remind us that he is ultimately the \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven and earth.
- 9. The contrast between the king of Babylon and the King of kings is profound: Nebuchadnezzar followed his own path and was \_\_\_\_\_ by God, but Jesus perfectly followed the will of his Father, and he is eternally enthroned at the right hand of God. Nebuchadnezzar shows the dangers of pride and Christ reveals the blessings of humility.

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**Answer Key:** Key word(s): “ruleth” • 1. sovereign • 2. Daniel • 3. a) iii) earth; b) i) watcher; ii) band; iii) years; iv) basest • 4. a) preserved • 5. repentance • 6. will • 7. heaven • 8. ruler • 9. dethroned

**How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study:** (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. Keep in mind that some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.

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<sup>2</sup> *One hour* can mean a “moment” or “immediately.” (cf. Dan. 3:6, 15; Gal. 2:5) or an unspecified amount of time.