

Daniel 4:1-37

January 5, 2025



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?
- What Scripture has been shaping you recently?
- Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?
- What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?
- What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?
- What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?
- What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Animal Charades

Students will act out various animals in this game of charades.

Items needed:

- Small slips of paper with animal names
- A cup or bowl to draw the slips from

Animals (feel free to adjust or add more):

- Lion
- Cat
- Dog
- Elephant
- Squirrel
- Giraffe
- Horse
- Donkey
- Cow
- Pig
- Bat
- Bee

How to Play:

1. Put the slips of paper into the cup or bowl.
2. Ask for volunteers to take turns being "it."
3. The student who is "it" draws a slip and acts out the animal without making any sounds.
4. The rest of the students try to guess the animal.

Teaching Moment:

Today's chapter in Daniel tells one of the crazier stories in Scripture. King Nebuchadnezzar was given the mind of an animal because he didn't accept that God was in charge. (Yes, he really acted like a wild animal!) This story reminds us to stay humble and remember that God is always in control.

How would you define pride?

Why is pride a sin?

DISCUSSION

 ASK MULTIPLE VOLUNTEERS TO READ DANIEL 4:1-37.

How did Nebuchadnezzar praise God in verses 1-3?

What happened in Nebuchadnezzar's dream?

How is this like or different from his dream in chapter 2?

What did Daniel say the dream meant?

What advice did Daniel give Nebuchadnezzar?

How do we need this same advice today?

What sin did Nebuchadnezzar commit in verse 30? How was he prideful?

What can we learn about God and how He works in our lives in these verses?

What did Nebuchadnezzar realize at the end of this passage?

This is the third recorded time that God worked in a miraculous way in Nebuchadnezzar's life. Do you think he learned his lesson this time? Why or why not?

GOING DEEPER

Nebuchadnezzar's pride was his downfall. How are we still prideful today?

When was a time you had to learn something about God the hard way?
What happened?

APPLICATION

What can we learn from Nebuchadnezzar's actions?

What can we learn about God in today's reading?

God did miraculous things in Nebuchadnezzar's lifetime. How has He shown up in your life?

Where might God be calling you to repent of pride now?

How can we better acknowledge that God is in charge in our lives? Where do we need to surrender control to Him?

PRAYER

Thank God for using His Word to teach and speak to us today. Thank Him for being sovereign over all human kingdoms. Ask Him for help surrendering control and pride in our lives.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage as we continue our study of Daniel.

January 12, 2025 --- Daniel 5:1-31

COMMENTARY

DANIEL 4

Dream of a Large Tree (4:1–37). This chapter begins and ends with Nebuchadnezzar praising the Lord (4:1–3, 34–37). In the intervening verses he related a personal experience through which he came to a greater realization of God’s sovereignty and learned the dangers of pride.

The King Reports His Dream to Daniel (4:1–18). While lying in his palace, the king had a terrifying dream. When his wise men and diviners were unable to interpret it, he summoned Daniel. In his dream Nebuchadnezzar saw a large fruit tree with beautiful leaves. Animals found shelter in its shade, and birds lodged in its branches. An angelic being then commanded that the tree be cut down and that the stump be bound with iron and bronze. The angel then announced that the man represented by the stump would be overtaken by insanity and would live outdoors like an animal for a specified period of time (“seven times” may refer to seven years; see 7:25).

Daniel Interprets the Dream (4:19–27). Daniel informed Nebuchadnezzar that the tree represented none other than the king himself. Though great and mighty, the king would be brought low. For a period of time he would be plagued by an extreme form of insanity (known as boanthropy or lycanthropy) and would actually behave like an animal. Once he was sufficiently humbled, Nebuchadnezzar would be restored to his throne.

The Dream Comes True (4:28–37). One year later, Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was fulfilled. As he proudly looked about the great city of Babylon, a voice from heaven announced to him that he was about to be humbled. He began acting like an animal, and his hair and nails grew exceedingly long. Finally, God restored his sanity, causing Nebuchadnezzar to praise Him publicly and warn others of the consequences of pride.