

Nebuchadnezzar



King Nebuchadnezzar ruled over the large Babylonian Empire.

The capital city was called “Babylon.”

In that day Babylon was the greatest city in the world.



Babylon measured 14 miles from north to south, and 14 miles from east to west. The city was surrounded by walls 350 feet high, the height of a modern 35-story building. The walls were 80 feet thick. Just imagine walls like this around a city!

The great river Euphrates looped and flowed diagonally through the city. The walls were arched over the river at the points of entry and exit.

In daylight, a constant watch was kept from the top of the walls. From that height the watchers could see an approaching enemy. At night, all gates were securely closed and barred.

Babylon was the strongest fortress in the world. Even a small force of brave men could have held it for years. It was considered siege-proof.



Within the city of Babylon were many beautiful buildings.

There were large temples decorated with gold, silver, and, precious stones. In and around the temples there were hundreds of gold and silver images of gods. A solid gold image of Bel stood 50 feet high, and weighed 43,000 pounds.

There were also a number of other splendid palaces for the nobility of the realm.





Babylon had many magnificent gardens. It contained one of the seven wonders of the world known as The Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

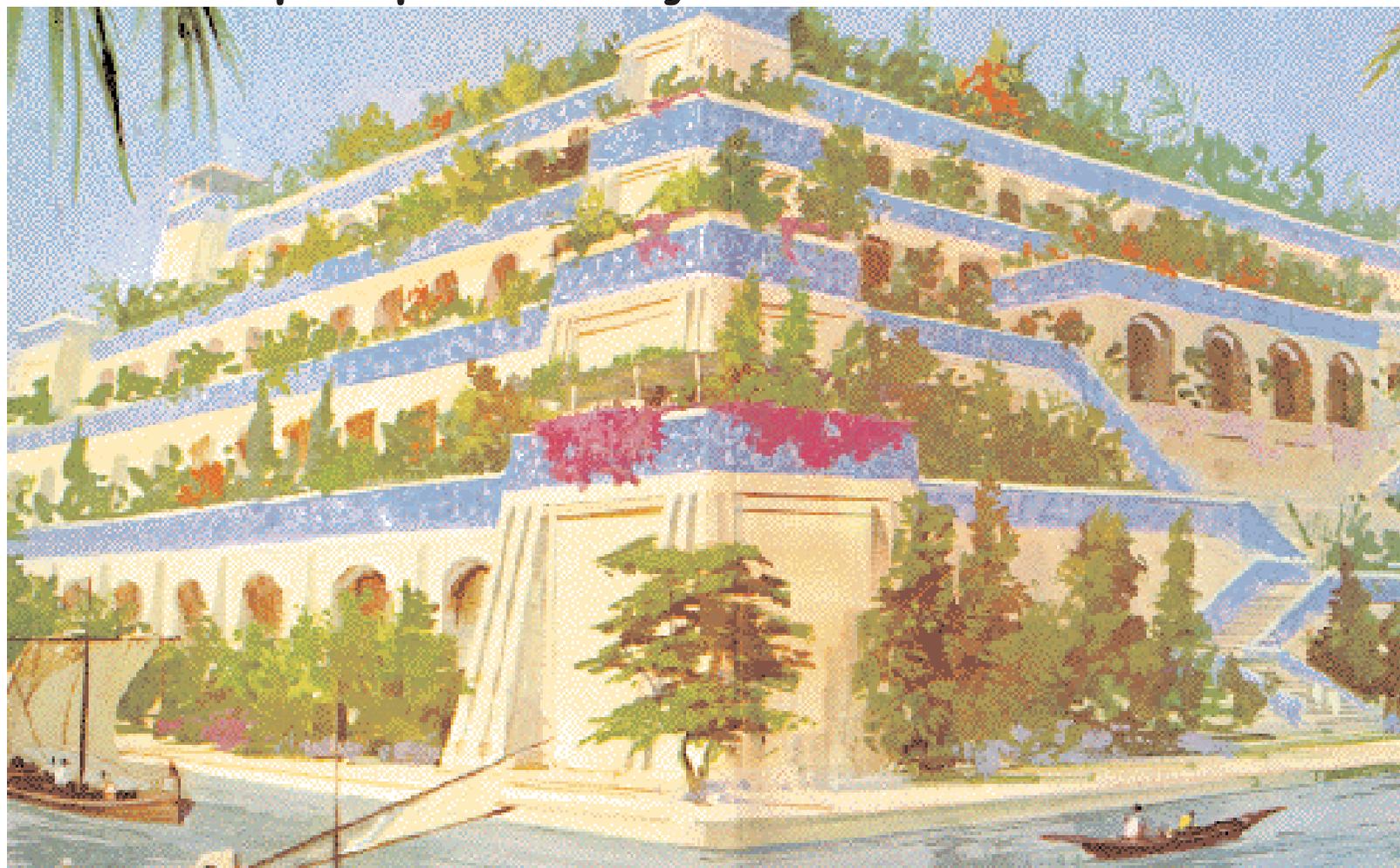
This was built by Nebuchadnezzar to please his favorite wife, a princess of the Medes. She was unhappy on the flat plains of Babylon and longed for the more rugged scenery of her native country with its hills.

To make her happy, a garden consisting of several levels, or tiers, was constructed with a base over a hundred acres.

Each succeeding tier, smaller than the one below it, was supported by enormous stone arches, thirty feet high, arch upon arch, forming a tapering pyramidal structure 300 feet in height.

Each level was overlaid with soil, and planted with exotic flowers gathered from all over the world. Their colorful blossoms hung down and cascaded from one level to another with spectacular effect.

Visitors from the world over came to see this magnificent garden and also to admire all the other wonders of Babylon, the greatest and most prosperous city in the world.



King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you!

It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.

How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace.

Dan. 4:1-4

But as I was stretched out on my bed I had a dream that scared me — a nightmare that shook me.

I sent for all the wise men of Babylon so that they could interpret the dream for me.

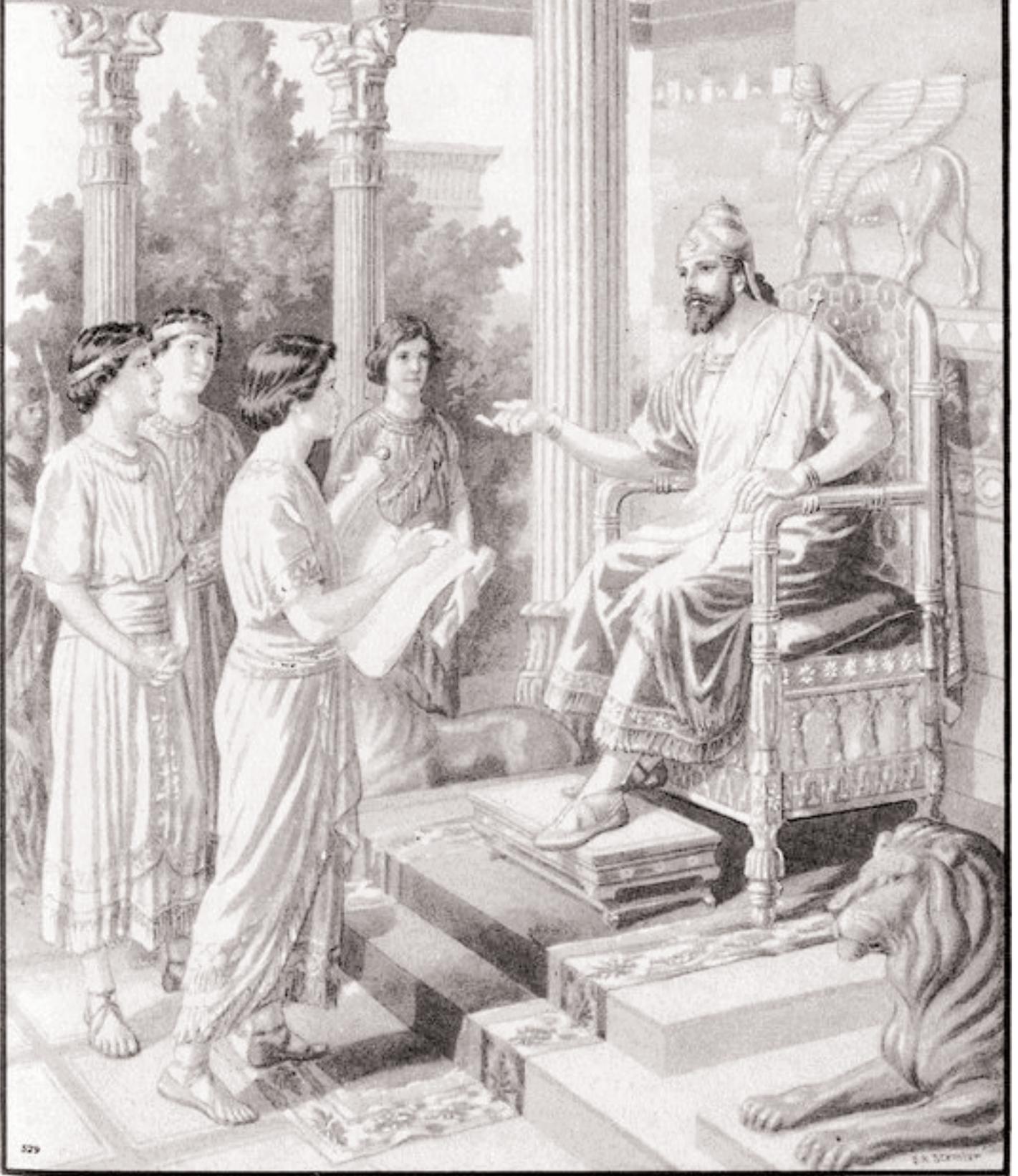
When they were all assembled — magicians, enchanters, fortunetellers, witches — I told them the dream.

None could tell me what it meant.

And then Daniel came in.

His Babylonian name is Belteshazzar, named after my god, a man full of the divine Holy Spirit. I told him my dream.

Dan. 4:5-8



'Belteshazzar,' I said, 'chief of the magicians, I know that you are a man full of the divine Holy Spirit and that there is no mystery that you can't solve. Listen to this dream that I had and interpret it for me.'



This is what I saw as I was stretched out on my bed. I saw a big towering tree at the center of the world.

As I watched, the tree grew huge and strong. Its top reached the sky and it could be seen from the four corners of the earth.

Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant—enough food for everyone! Wild animals found shelter under it, birds nested in its branches, everything living was fed and sheltered by it.

Dan. 4:10-12



And this also is what I saw as I was stretched out on my bed. I saw a holy watchman descend from heaven, and call out:

Chop down the tree, lop off its branches, strip its leaves and scatter its fruit. Chase the animals from beneath it and shoo the birds from its branches.

But leave the stump and roots in the ground, belted with a strap of iron and bronze in the grassy meadow. Let him be soaked in heaven's dew and take his meals with the animals that graze.

Let him lose his mind and get an animal's mind in exchange, And let this go on for seven seasons.

The angels announce this decree, the holy watchmen bring this sentence, So that everyone living will know that the High God rules human kingdoms.

He arranges kingdom affairs however he wishes, and makes leaders out of losers.

Dan. 4:13-17



This is what I, King Nebuchadnezzar, dreamed. It's your turn, Belteshazzar—interpret it for me. None of the wise men of Babylon could make heads or tails of it, but I'm sure you can do it. You're full of the divine Holy Spirit.



At first Daniel, who had been renamed Belteshazzar in Babylon, was upset. The thoughts that came swarming into his mind terrified him.

"Belteshazzar," the king said, "stay calm. Don't let the dream and its interpretation scare you."

"My master," said Belteshazzar, "I wish this dream were about your enemies and its interpretation for your foes."

Dan. 4:18-19

"The tree you saw that grew so large and sturdy with its top touching the sky, visible from the four corners of the world;

"The tree with the luxuriant foliage and abundant fruit, enough for everyone; the tree under which animals took cover and in which birds built nests—

"You, O king, are that tree. You have grown great and strong. Your royal majesty reaches sky-high, and your sovereign rule stretches to the four corners of the world."

Dan 4:20-22



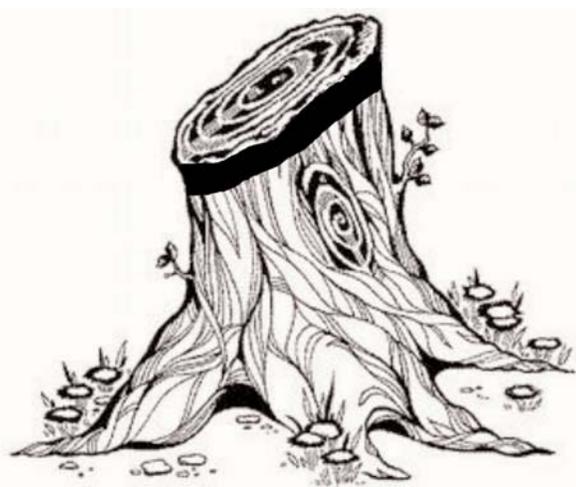
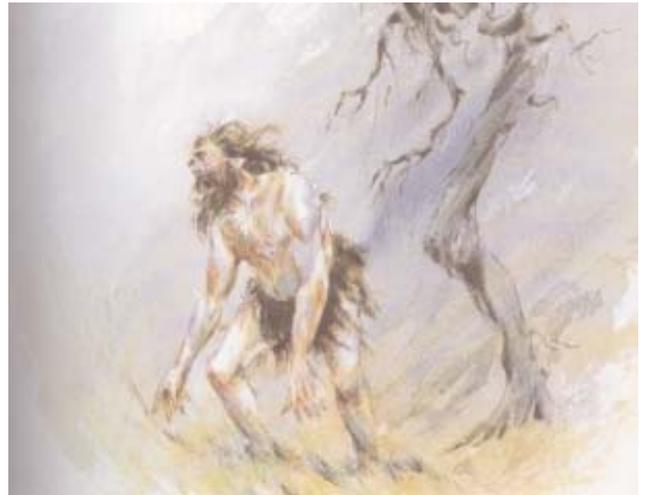
"But the part about the holy angel descending from heaven and proclaiming, 'Chop down the tree, destroy it, but leave stump and roots in the ground belted with a strap of iron and bronze in the grassy meadow; let him be soaked with heaven's dew and take his meals with the grazing animals for seven seasons'--this, O king, also refers to you.

"It means that the High God has sentenced my master the king:

"You will be driven away from human company and live with the wild animals.

"You will graze on grass like an ox. You will be soaked in heaven's dew.

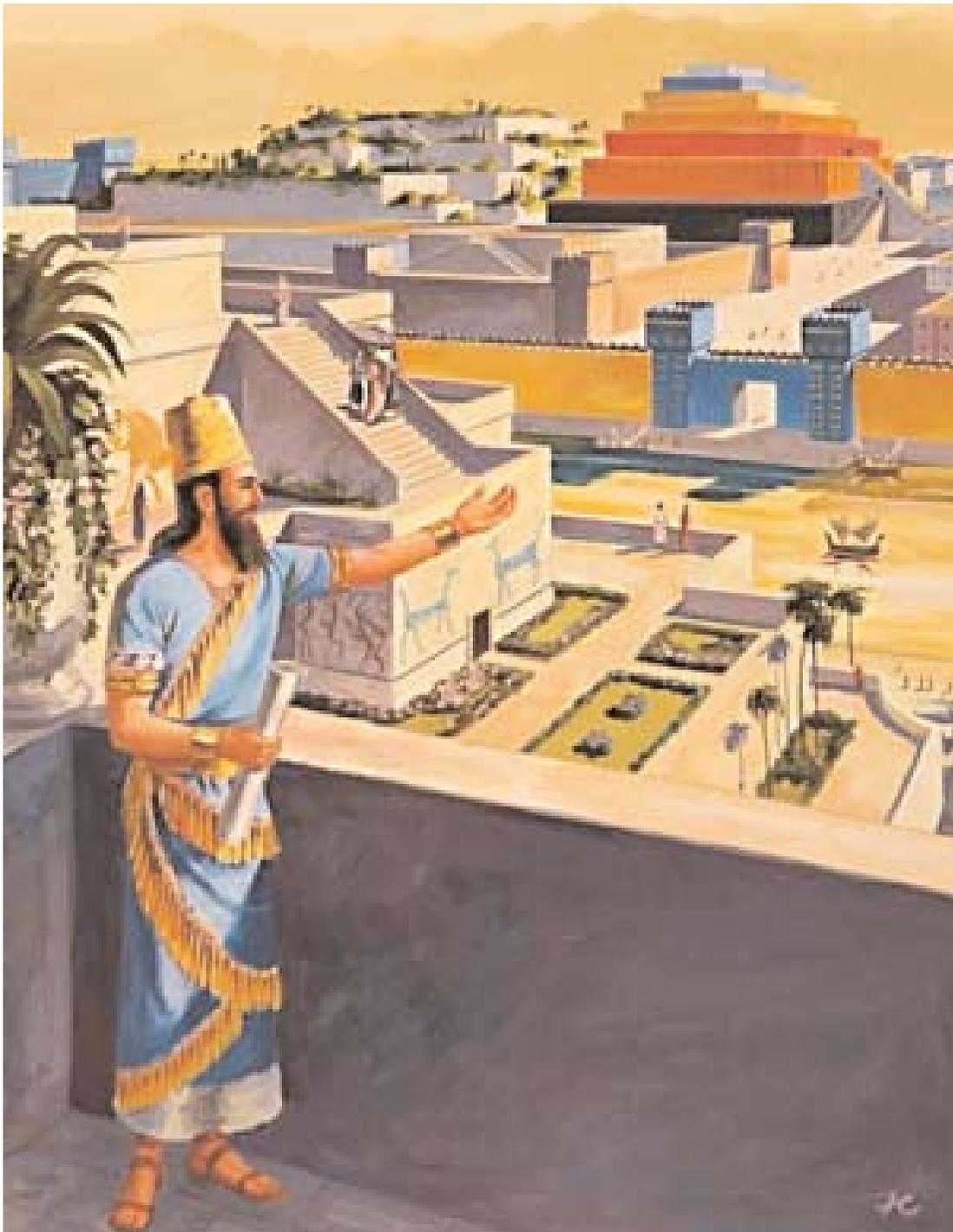
"This will go on for seven seasons, and you will learn that the High God rules over human kingdoms and that he arranges all kingdom affairs.



"The part about the tree stump and roots being left means that your kingdom will still be there for you after you learn that it is heaven that runs things.

"So, king, take my advice: Make a clean break with your sins and start living for others. Quit your wicked life and look after the needs of the down-and-out. Then you will continue to have a good life."

Dan. 4:23-27



All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Just twelve months later, he was walking on the balcony of the royal palace in Babylon and boasted,

"Look at this, Babylon the great! And I built it all by myself, a royal palace adequate to display my honor and glory!"

Dan. 4:28-30

The words were no sooner out of his mouth than a voice out of heaven spoke,

"This is the verdict on you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your kingdom is taken from you.

"You will be driven out of human company and live with the wild animals. You will eat grass like an ox. The sentence is for seven seasons, enough time to learn that the High God rules human kingdoms and puts whomever he wishes in charge."

It happened at once. Nebuchadnezzar was driven out of human company, ate grass like an ox, and was soaked in heaven's dew. His hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a hawk. Dan. 4:31-33



At the end of the seven years, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked to heaven. I was given my mind back and I blessed the High God, thanking and glorifying God, who lives forever. His sovereign rule lasts and lasts, his kingdom never declines and falls.

Life on this earth doesn't add up to much, but God's heavenly army keeps everything going. No one can interrupt his work, no one can call his rule into question.

At the same time that I was given back my mind, I was also given back my majesty and splendor, making my kingdom shine. All the leaders and important people came looking for me. I was reestablished as king in my kingdom and became greater than ever.

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.

Dan. 4:34-37

Lessons for Us

Luke 18:14:

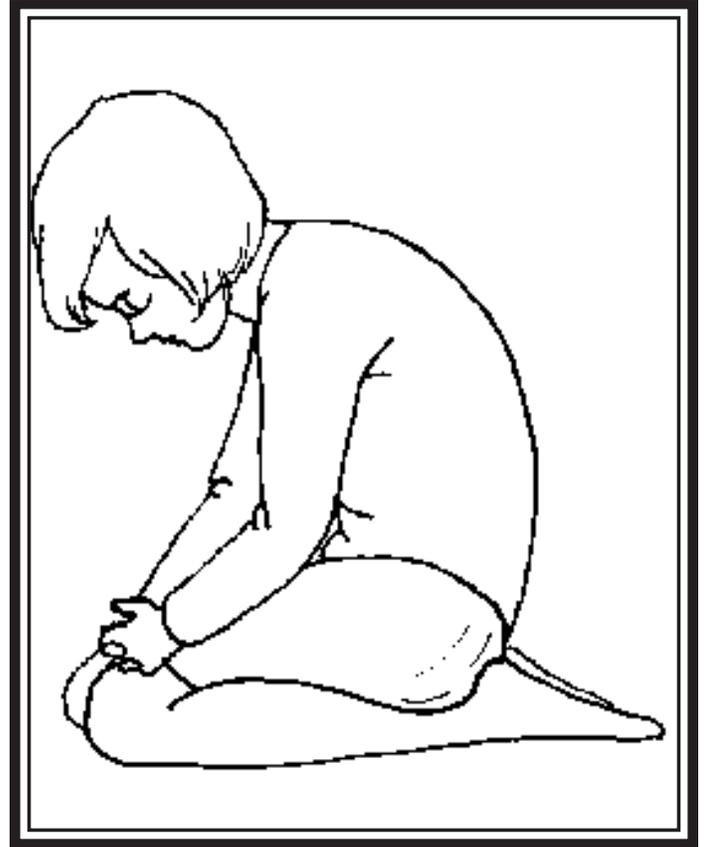
"Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased."

1 Peter 5:6:

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

James 4:6:

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."



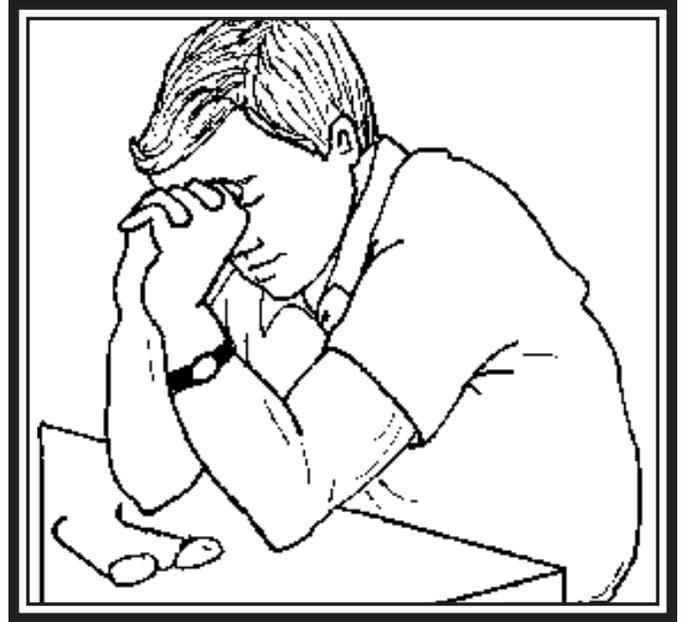
Pride is extremely dangerous!

Pride is a sickness which can lead to the loss of everything.

Pride develops very gradually and manifests itself in a feeling of superiority, of being better than others.

The slightest tendency toward pride should be noted and curbed.

If you begin to think you are somebody great and have a special standing before the Lord above others, remember 1 Cor. 10:12: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."



If you think you are better than others, remember Phil. 2:3: "...in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves."

The lesson Nebuchadnezzar learned was "that the Most High reigns over the realm of men, and gives it to anyone whom he chooses."

Nebuchadnezzar said in Dan. 4:37:

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and honour the king of Heaven; for all he does is right, his dealings are all just, and haughty men he is able to abase."

