



Cut Down to Save

In the middle of winter, Ms. Tina ordered a tropical tree through the mail. Unfortunately, she did not hear the delivery truck arrive. The tree sat outside on her front porch in 20° F (-7° C) for many hours before it was discovered. That was way too cold for this tree; and by the time Ms. Tina brought it into the warm house, it already looked damaged. Immediately, she cut off the branches that looked the worst. Sadly, more and more of the tree died. Eventually, Ms. Tina cut the tree down to its stump. Anxiously she waited to see if it would grow back.



Imagine Ms. Tina's joy when, one day, she saw tiny green stems emerging from the dead-looking stump. Cutting off all the dead and damaged parts had saved the tree!



1 In the last two lessons we have learned about an important Babylonian king. What was his name? Unscramble the letters.
BNRUDZACEZEAHN
Daniel 4:1 _____



King Nebuchadnezzar had a big problem.

- 2** What was his problem?
Daniel 4:37 (last sentence) King Nebuchadnezzar had a problem with _____
- 3** What did God do to help him?
Daniel 4:5 "I saw a _____ which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me."




Read about the dream God gave the king, and then answer the questions below. **Daniel 4:10–26**

- 4** **True / False** This dream was about a very tall tree.
- 5** **True / False** The tree's branches reached all over Jerusalem.
- 6** **True / False** Only sheep took shelter under the tree.
- 7** **True / False** The tree was cut down to its stump.



When the king told Daniel his dream, Daniel was astonished.

- 8** Why didn't he know what to say?
Daniel 4:19 "Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. So the king spoke, and said, 'Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.' Belteshazzar answered and said, 'My lord, may the dream concern those who _____ you, and its interpretation concern your _____!'"

 **Astonished:** Greatly surprised or impressed

Because of Nebuchadnezzar's pride, his greatness would be cut way back. But his kingdom would be restored after seven times, or years, had gone by.

Daniel, faithful servant that he was, told King Nebuchadnezzar what the dream represented.

Read Daniel 4:20–26. Then draw a line to match the symbols with the interpretations.

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Large, beautiful tree | God and His angels |
| Beasts of the field | King Nebuchadnezzar |
| Watchers | Nations Nebuchadnezzar ruled |
| Seven times | Nebuchadnezzar as a madman |
| Wet stump in the field | Seven years |

What did Daniel urge the king to do so that this terrible judgment would not happen to him?

- 9** **Daniel 4:27** "Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your _____ by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing _____ to the poor."

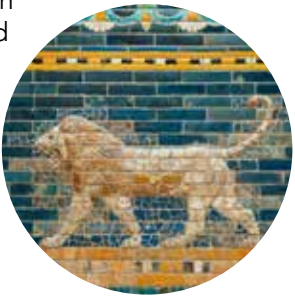
King Nebuchadnezzar listened to Daniel and changed his ways—for a while. But he didn't completely humble himself and repent and get a new heart.

Have you ever pulled up weeds in the garden? What happens if you pull the top off of a weed, but don't pull up the root? Usually it will grow back! So if you want to get rid of a weed completely, you have to pull it up root and all. That's like it is with sin. Nebuchadnezzar changed some of his actions, but didn't completely humble his heart. Soon, the sin crept back into his life and he became just like he was before—proud and unkind to the people he ruled.



About a year later, when the king was walking around in his palace looking at the city of Babylon, the ugly weed of pride appeared.

- 10** What did he say?
Daniel 4:30 "Is not this great Babylon, that _____ have built for a royal dwelling by _____ mighty power and for the honor of _____ majesty?"
- 11** What does the Bible say about pride?
Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a _____."



Suddenly the dream came true. The king was out of his mind and acted like an animal. So they put him in the fields and he began eating grass like cows!

12 Did God enjoy punishing King Nebuchadnezzar? **Ezekiel 33:11**
Yes / No

Just like Ms. Tina had to cut her tree way back to keep it from dying, God saved Nebuchadnezzar by taking away his kingdom, which had made him feel so proud.

13 What happened after seven years?
Daniel 4:34 "And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my _____ returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever."

Just like the dream said, after seven years, the king's reasoning ability came back to him, and he could rule Babylon again.

What about us? We might begin to think that we are very smart, or beautiful, or that we can do things very well. We might play ball really well, be a good artist, or play a musical instrument better than our friends. Sometimes people tell us how wonderful or pretty we are, and we begin to think, "I really am amazing!"

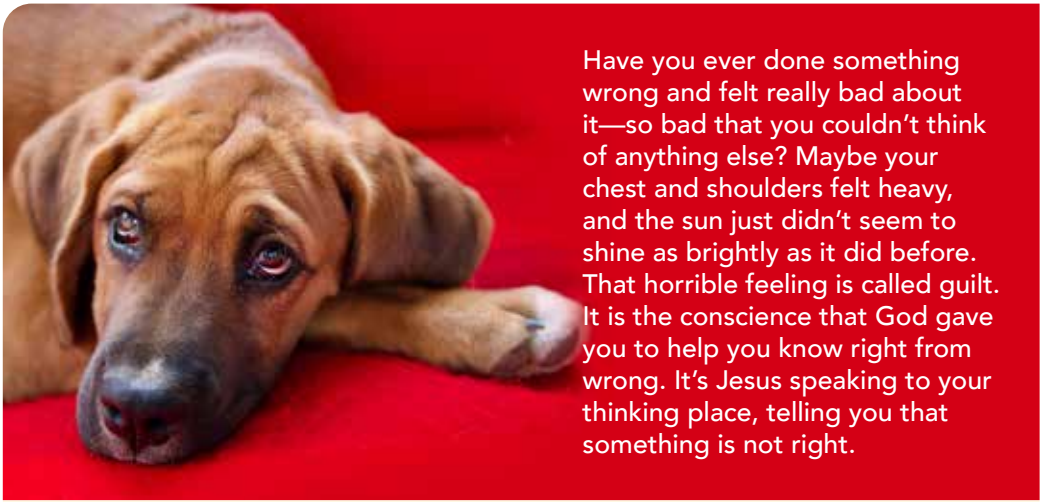


Watch out! That feeling is pride. That's the problem King Nebuchadnezzar had. We don't want to make the same mistake he did.

Instead, we want to remember that God gave all those gifts to us, and we should use those gifts to give glory back to God.

14 The Bible tells us of Someone who humbled Himself. Who was He?
Philippians 2:5-8 "Let this mind be in you which was also in _____ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He _____ Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

Jesus didn't get humbled like Nebuchadnezzar. He humbled Himself. He was high and honored in heaven; yet He chose to come down to this earth and become a man with no honors. He did it because He loves you!



Have you ever done something wrong and felt really bad about it—so bad that you couldn't think of anything else? Maybe your chest and shoulders felt heavy, and the sun just didn't seem to shine as brightly as it did before. That horrible feeling is called **guilt**. It is the conscience that God gave you to help you know right from wrong. It's Jesus speaking to your thinking place, telling you that something is not right.

All the sins that we commit are recorded in the books of heaven. If we hold on to those sins, they will make us so unhappy! Doing good things afterward doesn't erase those sins from our book in heaven.



15 How bad are our sins? What does the Bible say?
Isaiah 64:6 "But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy _____; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."
16 How do we get rid of the record of our sins in our book in heaven?
1 John 1:9 "If we confess our _____, He [Jesus] is faithful and just to _____ us our sins and to cleanse us from _____ unrighteousness."



The only way to get rid of those sins and get them out of the book in heaven is to repent—to pray and confess those sins to Jesus, and turn away from them.

When we do this, Jesus trades with us. He takes our sin and gives us His beautiful white robe of righteousness. He says we are forgiven. He gives us a new name. No longer does He view us as a "sinner," but as a "saint."

Then, when the heavenly Father sees us, He sees the beautiful righteousness—obedience or worthiness—of His own dear Son, Jesus.

Remember, it's a trade.

17 When Jesus gives us His goodness, what does He get?
2 Corinthians 5:21 "For He made Him who knew no sin to be _____ for _____, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

After the trade, Jesus got our dirty, terrible sins. He became sin for us!

18 What were the consequences for Jesus? What is the wages of sin?
Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is _____, but the gift of God is eternal _____ in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Sin separates from God. On the cross, our sins separated Jesus from His Father, and that broke His heart. Was that a fair trade for Jesus? No, it was not. But **you** were worth it to Him. He loves you so much! He risked everything because He wanted **you** to have the opportunity to **choose** to be saved.

Don't ever believe anyone who tells you that you aren't worth anything. You are worth everything to Jesus!



19 Will you ask Jesus, right now, to take your sins away and give you His righteousness? _____

Answers

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Nebuchadnezzar | 6. false | 11. fall | 15. rags |
| 2. pride | 7. true | 12. No | 16. sins / forgive / all |
| 3. dream | 8. hate / enemies | 13. understanding | 17. sin / us |
| 4. true | 9. sins / mercy | 14. Christ Jesus / humbled | 18. death / life |
| 5. false | 10. I / my / my | | |

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