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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2346 ~ Nebuchadnezzar goes Mad.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylonia, ruled the world from 605 BC to 562 BC, and during that time he built many cities. One of his most famous building achievements was called the 'Hanging Gardens of Babylon'. He built terraced roof gardens on top of stone arches within his palace grounds on the eastern side of the city. A series of mechanical pumps took water from the Euphrates River up to the garden beds.

Nebuchadnezzar had the gardens built for his homesick wife, who had been married to him to formalise an alliance between Babylonia and the Medes. The king attempted to please her by planting the trees and plants of her homeland near the palace. As a result, Babylon was the most splendid city of the known world at the time, and these magnificent Hanging Gardens were regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, the king had another strange dream; only this time, he could remember all the details of it. Nebuchadnezzar called for his wise men and counsellors and told them his dream, before asking them to explain what the dream meant. They couldn't, so Nebuchadnezzar sent for Daniel to ask him for God's explanation.

This was the dream that frightened the king, as recorded in the Bible book of *Daniel*, Chapter 4: "While I was lying in my bed ... I saw a large tree in the middle of the earth. The tree grew very tall and strong, reaching high into the heavens for all the world to see. It had fresh green leaves and it was loaded with fruit for all to eat. Wild animals lived in its shade and birds nested in its branches. All the world was fed from this tree."

The king continued: "Then as I lay there dreaming, I saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. The messenger shouted, 'Cut down the tree and lop off its branches! Shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit! Chase the wild animals from its shade and the birds from its branches but leave the stump and the roots in the ground, bound with a band of iron and bronze and surrounded by tender grass. Now let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the wild animals among the plants of the field.'

The messenger continued: "For seven periods of time, let him have the mind of a wild animal instead of the mind of a human, for this has been decreed by the messengers; it is commanded by the holy ones, so that everyone may know that the Most High (God) rules over the kingdoms of the world. He gives them to anyone He chooses – even to the lowliest of people."

Most of Chapter 4 in *Daniel* is a public letter (or decree) written by the king 8 years after he'd dreamed of this tree. At the beginning of the letter, Nebuchadnezzar praised God because God had given him some miraculous signs and wonders.

After the initial 12 months of delay and then the 7 years of punishment were over, the king wanted to publicly thank God for delivering him from insanity and restoring him back to his throne. For Nebuchadnezzar had finally come to acknowledge God's sovereignty over his rulership. He'd learnt the hard way that God does as He pleases and no one, not even the king, can hold back His hand. More importantly, Nebuchadnezzar realised that he'd been walking in pride and that God had now finally humbled him; only after being humbled he was ready to be lifted up again. The chapter ends with the king's declaration: "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

But sadly, in verses 8 and 18 of the same chapter, Nebuchadnezzar speaks of other lesser pagan gods, which shows that he still hadn't given up his belief in a number of his foreign idols. Today, Biblical scholars don't agree on whether Nebuchadnezzar will be seen in heaven or not.

But from his limited time of madness, Nebuchadnezzar had learnt to fear the Lord, and we can only wonder at the reaction to such a powerful humbling of the king among the Jewish exiles living in Babylonia! Their God may have left Jerusalem, but He was now reigning in Babylon! And that's the last we hear of Nebuchadnezzar in the Bible and ancient archaeology. There's plenty of evidence for his early years of rulership, but after his humbling, there seems to be no more known about Nebuchadnezzar's life.

When we review Nebuchadnezzar's life, can it be true that great pride can make a person insane? In Nebuchadnezzar's case, God said that He would punish the king with insanity, before restoring his mind again once humbled. But today, worldly success or the appearance of success can generate pride so powerfully that it can lead to irrational behaviour. Pride, self-confidence and self-glory are never good things for sinful humans to do. You can see the evidence of this in Hollywood in America. Through the media, movie celebrities are glorified out of all proportion, and time after time we publicly see their pride and their success then destroying them.

For Hollywood celebrities in particular, the lines between fiction and reality often become blurred and consequently, celebrities act foolishly and lose the ability to control themselves and their affairs. Enter pride and exit sanity. Human beings were not designed to bear the weight of their own self-glory, for all of us were made to glorify our Creator God and Him only.

There are different types of pride: pride in one's self, as displayed by the archangel Lucifer, who chose himself as god over his Creator; the pride of holding great power and wealth, which King Nebuchadnezzar took for himself through war and political allegiances; the pride of one's position or importance; and spiritual pride. Are you aware of any spiritual pride in your life? You have spiritual pride if you are proud of your knowledge of Bible doctrines. Or you go to church mocking those who don't get involved in as many church activities as you do? Be warned of the type of spirit that you have in your heart and forsake the reasons why you undertake religious things over humble godly thoughts and actions.

Spiritual pride is deadly and it's very evident in the Laodicean church, as mentioned in Chapter 3 of the last book of the Bible, called '*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*'. When a person or church says, "I am rich and have everything I want. I don't need a thing!" then this is nothing more than selfish spiritual pride. Jesus said that we're really poor spiritually in our hearts, and before God, we are wretched, blind and naked – although we don't know it. The more spiritually proud we become, the more spiritually poor we really are. Those who humbly recognise their sin and admit their sorry spiritual state to God will be saved by the grace and mercy of Christ. Yet those who are self-righteous and spiritually judgmental of others, cannot be saved by Jesus, as they in their pride seek to seize God's rightful place of authority in their lives so they can glorify themselves.

Totally opposed to such wilful pride is the restorative power of choosing Christ's humility. God wants humble hearts in His people. In Micah, Chapter 6, the Lord tells the people what is good and what He requires of you: Each person is "to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with [their] God."

Through God's Spirit, we can choose to be humble and remain humble. The Bible doesn't say we should ask God to humble us; instead, we are repeatedly invited by God to humble ourselves before Him. God can certainly find ways of bringing proud Christians back down to earth, and He will, because He loves you. Not everyone will humble themselves: Plague after plague fell upon Pharaoh in Egypt and his people, but that selfish leader wouldn't humble himself to save anyone, not even his own son from death.

When we humble ourselves before God, God promises that He will raise us up in due time. In imitating Christ's humility, here's an unfailing principle you should know: 'God exalts those who are most humble and humbles those who are most proud.' For in 1st Peter, Chapter 5, verse 6, it says: "All of you serve each other in humility, for God opposes the proud but favours the humble."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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