

Are You Like a Puffer Fish?

by John Isaac Edwards

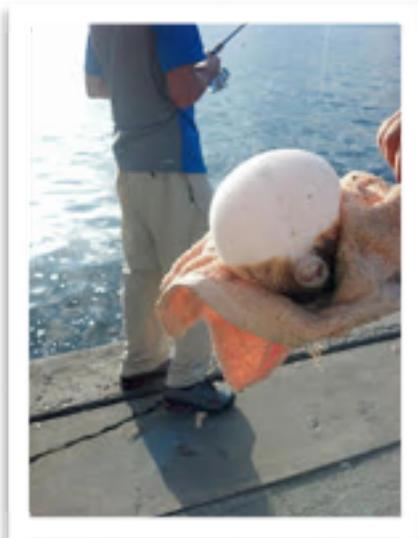
Have you ever reeled in a puffer fish, sometimes called a blow fish? As a defense mechanism, this creature has the ability to inflate itself like a balloon so that it is several times its normal size.

This got me to thinking about how some folks are like a puffer fish, in that they are puffed up about something. May I call to your attention some Biblical examples of those who were puffed up?

1) **Nebuchadnezzar.**

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was puffed up when he said, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?” (Dan. 4:30). The Lord had an unusual way of deflating this prideful man as, “...he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws” (Dan. 4:33).

2) **Uzziah.** This king of Judah did a lot of good in his life, but his downfall came when he allowed himself to get puffed up. 2



Chronicles 26:16 records, “But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.” Only the priests, the sons of Aaron, were authorized to burn incense unto the Lord (Num.

16:36-40). In fact, 80 priests of the Lord withstood Uzziah, but he “...was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense...” (2 Chr. 26:19). The end result — he was smitten with leprosy by the Lord and “...was a leper unto the day of his death...” (2 Chr. 26:21). Some today are puffed up like Uzziah — they are determined to do what they want to do, no matter what anyone (even the Lord) thinks or says about it!

3) **Edom.** Obadiah, the shortest book in the Old Testament, reveals God’s judgment on Edom for her pride and violence against her brother. The Lord said, “The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord” (Obad. 3-4).

4) **Jonah.** Remember the great fish story in the book of Jonah? The prophet was sent to the great city of Nineveh to cry against it for their wickedness. He boarded a ship in the opposite direction, to flee from the presence of the Lord! When the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, after the Lord had given him a great whaling, he "...arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord..." (Jon. 3:3). God spared Nineveh as the people turned from their evil way. Chapter 4 finds Jonah puffed up with anger as "...it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry" (v. 1). The scene shows the prophet sitting in the shadow of a booth, pouting, with the attitude, "... It is better for me to die than to live" (vv. 3, 8). God taught Jonah a great lesson in pity for the pitiful. We can benefit from that as well!

5) **The Elder Brother.** The parable of the lost son cannot but touch our hearts. Remember the attitude of the elder brother when the lost son came home? He was angry, would not go in and said to his father, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends" (Lk. 15:28-29). Puffed up, wasn't he? Some today act as if they have never transgressed the Father's commandment!

6) **The Pharisee.** "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Lk. 18:11-12). Pretty full of himself, wasn't he?

7) **Herod.** Acts 12 finds Herod in royal apparel making a speech. The people shouted, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man" (v. 22). He was eaten of worms and died because he gave not God the glory! (v. 23).

8) **The Corinthians.** Paul's first Corinthian letter finds brethren "puffed up" (1 Cor. 4:6, 18-19). When there was common report of fornication, they were "puffed up" about it (1 Cor. 5:1-2). Such a disposition is contrary to the spirit of love as, "Charity...is not puffed up" (1 Cor. 13:4).

Next time you find yourself blowing up like a puffer fish, you might remember these examples. Let's not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think (Rom. 12:3) and remember, "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5).

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