

(Daniel) the Fall and Rise of Nebuchadnezzar

by David Guzik

Nebuchadnezzar's testimony in Daniel chapter four reveals God's sovereignty and power, and the importance of humility and compassion in our lives.

Duration: 43:32

Topics: "Nebuchadnezzar"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the testimony of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter four. The speaker encourages the audience to reflect on their own testimonies and the ways in which God has worked in their lives. The sermon emphasizes the idea that the best is yet to come in terms of experiencing God's work and surrendering to Him. The speaker also highlights the importance of sharing one's testimony with others as a witness to God's greatness.

Transcript

Tonight, we're in Daniel chapter four, and this is an absolutely unique passage of scripture because it wasn't written by Daniel. It wasn't written by a prophet. As far as I know, this is the only extended passage in scripture written by a Gentile king.

Daniel chapter four was written by King Nebuchadnezzar, and it describes a radical event in his life. Let's take a look at it together here. Daniel chapter four, beginning at verse one, Nebuchadnezzar, the king to all peoples, nations and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied to you.

I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the most high God has worked for me. How great are his signs and how mighty his wonders. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

Have you ever heard of the idea in the Christian life of witnessing? Let's go out witnessing. Well, I want you to understand that witnessing isn't really a verb. Witness doesn't translate so readily into a verb.

Really a witness is a noun. A person is a witness because a witness is somebody who sees or experiences something that they give testimony about. Actually what a testimony, what a witness does when he tells the story is he's giving testimony.

You know this from a court of law, don't you? There you are. You may have never been in court, but you've seen the movies and such. We all have.

And I guess they're accurate enough. You know, the the judge is up there and there's the jury and here's the lawyers and and they ask somebody to get up on what on the witness stand and they ask the witness on the witness stand to give testimony. Well, in Daniel chapter four, Nebuchadnezzar is the witness and this is his testimony.

He has a story to tell about what God has done in his life. And as we go through this, I want you to think very carefully about what your story is. What's your story? Have you witnessed anything from God? Has God done anything in your life that you have witnessed to? You've been a witness.

It's like, well, look, God did this in my life. I'm the witness. Now here's the testimony that I can give of what God did in my life.

You have your testimony. This is Nebuchadnezzar's. Now he gives this greeting, he addresses this to the whole world, and he sort of tips his hand at the very beginning in his praise and in his worship of God.

He points out the fact that God, he has a kingdom that is an everlasting kingdom and that his dominion is from generation to generation. Now Nebuchadnezzar was a great king, an absolutely mighty and majestic king. But in this chapter, he recognizes that God's kingdom is far greater and that God's dominion is completely unique because it is, in fact, a everlasting kingdom.

Now verse nine, I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house and flourishing in my palace. I saw a dream which made me afraid and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. It's sort of poetic, isn't it? The thoughts on my bed and the visions in my head, they troubled me.

Nebuchadnezzar was at rest, but the rest that he had was the false piece of the ungodly. God is going to shake him from this place of false security. You know, we see that and meet that in the world all around us today, don't we? People that we know who give very little thought towards God, they certainly have not been converted by the spirit of God.

And they go on and they live their life. And because they're prosperous and things go OK in their life, they have a sense of rest, a sense of peace in their life. But it's the false piece of the ungodly.

It's not peace that will really last. It's certainly not peace that matters for eternity. But Nebuchadnezzar is being honest.

Man, everything was great. I had rest. I was flourishing in my palace.

But again, it was a false sense of security because one night he has a dream. Something breaks into his daily routine, it troubles him, he can't explain it. And so now, as this thing breaks into his daily routine, Nebuchadnezzar is deeply troubled inside of his mind.

He's bothered by this. Now, we know from the book of Daniel that this happened once before the Nebuchadnezzar, right? Daniel chapter two tells us about a disturbing dream he had on that occasion. And what did he do? He called in all of the wise men and he demanded that they tell him not only what the dream meant, but he also demanded that they tell him what the dream was.

None of them could tell him what the dream was. And so he said, well, off with your heads. I'm going to kill all of my counselors, all of my advisors.

And as they were rounding them up for mass execution, Daniel stepped forward and he said, well, there's a God in heaven who can reveal to Nebuchadnezzar what his dream was. Bring me before the king and I'll tell him what the dream was, because God will tell me. And it was a glorious whole account that we read there in Daniel chapter two.

But I want you to notice that Nebuchadnezzar seems to have forgotten this. Oh, not that he forgot that it happened, but he forgot the meaning of what happened back in Daniel chapter two, because we pick it up here again. Verse five, I saw a dream which made me afraid and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

Therefore, I issued a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans and the soothsayers came in and I told them the dream, but they did not make known to me its interpretation. But at last, Daniel came before me.

I want you to consider that first line of verse eight. But at last, Daniel came before me. Nebuchadnezzar, what are you thinking back in chapter two, none of those soothsayers, none of those astrologers, none of those Chaldeans could tell you what your dream was.

Right. And now you're turning back to them again. Why does it say at last Daniel came before me? Why didn't Nebuchadnezzar send for him first? Because Nebuchadnezzar is a lot like us, although at this point we should give Nebuchadnezzar more credit than we give ourselves, because at least we or most of us, we claim to be born again.

We claim to be converted. Nebuchadnezzar wasn't. But in our own lives, how often do we see that the Lord God, that prayer, that seeking things for what they really are, it's a last resort.

Well, after I've tried this and this and this and this and then the other thing and none of it works. Well, OK, I guess I'll try God. I guess I'll see what the Bible has to say about it.

You know, say a person's in financial trouble. Now they are just money problems all over in their life. You know, well, I got to do something to go to this financial expert and they buy this financial book and they read this financial newsletter and then they listen to this guy on the radio and all the rest of this.

Oh, what can I do? And they're talking to lawyers and accountants and all the rest. And none of it seems to get better. It just seems to get worse.

And then it might occur to them, you know what? Maybe God says something about how to do money and that, well, I've tried everything else. Maybe I should, you know, organize and look at my money and look at my material world, my financial world the same way God does. And then they see how God comes and he blesses them.

He rescues them. He ministers them. They think, why waste all the time? And they're convicting how often in our life we're going to the soothsayers or the astrologers or the Chaldeans, and not necessarily if we would go to these occultic things, but what we go to some other place other than the Lord God first.

Well, at last, at least he turned to the right thing. I guess we should get some credit for coming to the Lord eventually with our problems. But how much pain we'd spare ourselves if we came right away in any regard.

We see it right here. It says verse eight. But at last, Daniel came before me.

His name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my God. In him is the spirit of the holy God. Now, right there, Nebuchadnezzar is telling you that at the time that this happened, at the time of the dream and such, that he wasn't a believer in a true God because his God was the God Bell.

That's where the name Belteshazzar comes from. And so he's saying, well, my God is the God Bell, but the Lord God, he is in this prophet Daniel, but Bell is my God. And again, this absolutely amazes me.

When you think of what Nebuchadnezzar had seen up to the point of Daniel, chapter four, well, he saw the Hebrew young men miraculously sustained and made healthy and exalted above their companions, even though they wouldn't eat any of the food from the king's table. He saw Daniel give an absolutely supernatural insight to not only say what Nebuchadnezzar dream was, but to say what it meant and have it all perfectly laid out according to the divine will. He saw most remarkably at all of all, as we saw the last time we're in the book of Daniel.

He saw these three Hebrew young men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego miraculously preserved in the midst of the fiery furnace. He saw all of that and he still wasn't a believer. Friends, this this is awfully sobering for us.

Nebuchadnezzar was impressed with God, but being impressed with God isn't the same thing as being converted. Oh, he was very impressed. We find him impressed in chapter one.

We find him impressed in chapter two. We find him impressed in chapter three. And you may be impressed with God.

Congratulations. You can be just like Nebuchadnezzar. You see, it's not good enough.

You need to be surrendered to God. You need to be committed to God. You need to be surrendered to the power and the influence of the Holy Spirit.

That's where Daniel was. That's where Nebuchadnezzar was not. Well, we go on here, verse nine, he told him the dream saying, Belteshazzar, chief of the musicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy God is in you and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of the dream I have seen and its interpretation.

OK, well, here comes the dream. Verse 10. These were the visions of my head while on my bed, I was looking and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth.

Its height was great. The tree grew and became strong. Its height reached to the heavens and it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.

Its leaves were lovely, its fruit abundant. And then it was fruit for all the beasts of the field found shade under it. The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches and all flesh was fed from it.

You get that picture in your mind, don't you? You can envision this, don't you? A huge tree, strong, full of life, a mighty tree, you can see it from miles and miles around. It has food, it has shelter, it has strength, it has might, it has everything that you could ever want in a tree. It's king of the trees.

There it is right there. Majestic, wonderful, life giving. That's not the end of the story.

Verse 13, I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, it's just like cat in a hat or something. And you get that little thing going there anyway. And there was a watcher, a holy one coming down from heaven.

He cried aloud and said thus, chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beast get out from under it and let the birds from its branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump and its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze and the tender grass of the field.

Let it be wet with the dew of heaven and let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from that of a man and let him be given the heart of an animal and let seven times pass over him. This decision is by the decree of the watchers and the sentence by the word of the holy ones in order that the living may know that the most high rules in the kingdom of men gives it to whomever he will and sets it over the lowest of men.

Now. Nebuchadnezzar sees this dream and he sees this majestic, strong, huge, verdant tree and then a watcher, a holy one commentators are split whether the watcher and the holy one there are the same or two different. Most people agree that they're angelic beings.

Some people say that they're a specific order of angelic beings like cherubim and seraphim. You have the watchers and you have the holy ones. Other people say it's just Nebuchadnezzar's vocabulary.

It doesn't make any difference. Some sort of angelic being comes down and pronounces sentence upon that tree, cut it down, says. Remove it, no longer will it be noted for its size, no longer will it be noted for its strength, its prominence, its beauty, its fruit or its shelter, strip it all bare and then take that stump and put iron bands around it.

You say, what are the iron bands for? Well, they could be for the trees confinement, the stumps confinement. You're locked up with these bands of iron. Or it may be that the band of iron was for the protection of the stump so that no harm could come to it while it was in its humbled state.

Either one of these could be true. But there's a purpose behind it all. And the purpose is explained there in verse 17.

It's all in order that the living may know that the most high rules in the kingdom of men. This is what Nebuchadnezzar heard the watcher say in his dream. He heard those words in the dream and in light of all that, does anybody have any trouble interpreting this dream? You don't need to be a genius here.

It clearly deals with the humbling of a great man, especially as you see the transition there in verse 15. Now, in the middle of verse 15, that watcher stops speaking about an it and he starts speaking about a him, a person. And so we know that this isn't the toppling of a kingdom.

This isn't the toppling of an empire. This isn't the toppling of a government. It's a toppling of a man.

And a man is going to be chopped down and humbled just like this great tree. Now, I want you to observe something, go back a few verses, let's see, we want to take a look back in the same chapter where we read in verse seven. It says, then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans and the soothsayers came in and I told them the dream, but they did not make known to me its interpretation.

Did you notice the wording there in verse seven? It says they did not. It doesn't mean they could not. It says they did not.

I can just picture the scene. Nebuchadnezzar wakes up and he's all troubled. He wakes up, he's in a night's sweat, his heart's beating like crazy.

He wakes up and he looks around. Bring me a light. And he has a butler, a valet who's standing there all night just to be attentive to the king if he wants milk and cookies or whatever it would be.

And so he runs in. What's wrong, my lord? And the king says, give me my counselors, bring me the astrologers and the Chaldeans and all the rest. And they run.

You hear them running down the hall in the palace in the middle of the night and they come in with lamps burning. What is it, your highness? What can we do to help you? Oh, great king, I just had a dream. You need to interpret it for me.

And he tells him the dream, just like he told Daniel. And he goes, guys, whatever could this mean? And they all think we know what this means. Nebuchadnezzar, you're going down.

Now, do they want to say that to Nebuchadnezzar in the middle of the night? So what do they say? Oh, boy, you got us, King. Man, this is a tough one. Who really knows? Man, we'll have to look in the books or something.

Gosh, call Daniel. Daniel, maybe Daniel can help you. Well, Francis is not a hard dream to interpret.

And the the so-called wise men, maybe they were wise, but they didn't have courage. You know, Nebuchadnezzar wasn't really different than most rulers, kings, both ancient and modern. They want to believe that they rule, that they're in charge.

In our own little kingdom that we live in, we want to believe the same thing, right? That we're the captain of our own ship, we're the master of our fate, that, you know, we we're in charge here. Oh, how foolish. So they don't want to interpret the dream for him.

Verse 18, this dream I, Nebuchadnezzar, have seen now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation. But you're able for the spirit of the holy God is in you. Now, I don't think the ability rested in Daniel's wisdom.

I think the ability rested in Daniel's courage. Oh, the other people weren't able to do it, but they weren't able because they didn't have the courage to tell Nebuchadnezzar what it meant. Verse 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 hate you and its interpretations concern your enemies.

You know, Daniel's a different kind of man. You know, every one of those astrologers and Chaldeans and counselors to the king, they're there and they hear the dream and they instantly know what the interpretation is. Nebuchadnezzar probably knew what the interpretation was.

He just didn't want to believe it. He wanted an expert to tell him differently, probably. Nevertheless, these counselors and astrologers and Chaldeans, they knew what the dream meant.

But as soon as they figured out what the dream meant, each one of them said within their life, I can't tell them what this dream means because it'll get me into trouble. Their first thought was of themselves. You know, hey, I got a wife and kids at home, man, I can't tell him the dream will be off with my head.

Daniel is a different kind of man. Daniel knows what the dream means instantly. And as he stands there before the king, big tears start rolling down his face.

I mean, his tears begin to streak and he begins to sniffle and maybe just shake just a little bit. And it makes Nebuchadnezzar uncomfortable. He goes, Daniel, you know, just tell me what it is.

I mean, listen. And Daniel blurts out, Nebuchadnezzar, I care about you, you're my friend. I don't want this to happen to you.

I want it to happen to your enemies. Do you see the difference there? All the astrologers, all the counselors, they thought about themselves. Daniel heard the interpretation.

He thought about Nebuchadnezzar. Broke his heart. May God give us hearts that break for other people, for the spiritual calamity that will befall other people.

I guess in our day and age, there's there's a crisis every week. There's a new horror everywhere out in the world and maybe we just get calloused in our hearts. All the more reason for us to just present ourselves to God and say, God, break up my heart.

Make me like Daniel. Who would weep and and be visibly shaken. About the lost state of his dear friend, verse 20, now here comes the interpretation.

The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached the heavens and which could be seen by all the earth, whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant and which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and on whose branches the birds of the heavens had their habitation. You almost get the sense Daniel stalling. Right.

And again, it's not out of self preservation. He cares about this man in front of him, but he has to because he cares, he has to say what he's going to say in verse 22. Look at it.

It is you, O King, who have grown and become strong for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens and your dominion to the end of the earth. Daniel says to King Nebuchadnezzar, it's you, it's nobody else. It's not your son.

It's not your father. It's not your rival king in this other empire. It's you.

There's no ambiguity in this point. You know, King Nebuchadnezzar, I guess this dream says to us that we could all use a little bit of humbling, don't you think so, King Nebuchadnezzar? Now, there's none of that. It's you, O King, it's you.

Daniel brought the truth and love, he didn't reach for a general point, he laid it right down specifically. I'm reminded of the words of Nathan, the prophet. When he addressed King David.

When David needed to be confronted over some sin, what did he say to David? You are the man. You're the one. You've done this, the Holy Spirit ever done that to you.

You're the one. You're the one who needs to get this right. I'm shining my searchlight down on you.

Nebuchadnezzar heard those words and you wonder what he thought right at that moment. And Daniel is going to go on and explain again. Let's start at verse 22.

It is you, O King, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens and your dominion to the end of the earth. And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one coming down from heaven and saying, chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze and tender grass of the field, let it be wet with the dew of heaven and let him graze with the beast of the field till seven times pass over him.

This is the interpretation, O King, and this is the decree of the most high, which has come upon my lord, the king. They shall drive you from men. Your dwelling shall be with the beast of the field and they shall make you eat grass like oxen.

They shall wet you with the dew of heaven and seven times shall pass over you till you know that the most high rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever he chooses. And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you after you come to know that heaven rules. Therefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable to you.

Break off your sins by being righteous and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity. You know, I can just imagine Nebuchadnezzar listening to this explanation and thinking.

You've got to be kidding. Look, he must mean that there's going to be some years where we suffer some military defeats. There's going to be a lowering of my prestige.

It must mean that the Empire of Babylon is going to go into a recession and revenues into the royal treasury are going to be cut back. Hard times are ahead. I'm sure that's what it means.

Probably had no clue just how literally this was going to be fulfilled, Daniel told them. I'm sure he didn't believe it. His subsequent conduct shows us that Nebuchadnezzar didn't believe it.

He probably just blinked as Daniel with tears streaming down his face. Nebuchadnezzar, I implore with you to repent. This is God's warning to you.

This is God's invitation for you to get it right. You know, every warning of judgment that God's gift God gives is an implicit invitation to repentance and to have the judgment held back. That's exactly what Daniel says.

Nebuchadnezzar, if you humble yourself, if you do what's right before God, if you break off your sins, by the way, that's that's what repentance is. He's not telling Nebuchadnezzar to feel sorry. He says, break off your sins, make a break with them.

He didn't do it, but he's told to break off your sins, your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Don't just stop sinning, but go on and practice righteousness and generosity. He didn't do it.

Now. I was thinking about this today. And I considered it's very easy for us to look at Nebuchadnezzar and go, yeah, you big dummy.

Come on, God told you right here. And then I thought about that whole account of Nebuchadnezzar and the statue that he saw, the image of a man that he saw in the dream that Daniel interpreted, and he was the head of gold. Nebuchadnezzar was a great, powerful, mighty king, at least on a human level, he had a reason to be filled with pride.

What reason do I have? I mean, at least Nebuchadnezzar was a great, mighty king. Of course, he forgot. He forgot what the principle that Benjamin Franklin put forth in one of his proverbs.

Benjamin Franklin said, the greatest monarch on the proudest throne is obliged to sit on his own rear end. I mean, he's just like everybody else. Nebuchadnezzar forgot that.

And he was proud. So you see that he didn't take Daniel's advice in verse twenty seven, verse twenty eight now. All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.

Now, mind you, who's writing this? Nebuchadnezzar is writing this. Think it all happened to me just like it said. That at the end of 12 months, he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon.

The king spoke, saying, is this not great Babylon that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty? While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven. King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken, the kingdom has departed from you and they shall drive you from men in your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen and seven times shall pass over you until you know that the most high rules in the kingdom of men and he gives it to whomever he chooses.

Nebuchadnezzar said, I've heard that line somewhere before. Oh, yeah, that's what I heard the watcher say in the dream that I had. And now I hear it again.

I guess it's time for that dream to be fulfilled. How much time did God give Nebuchadnezzar to repent? Twelve months. Pretty generous of God, isn't he? How generous God is towards us.

Have you ever fallen into the trap of thinking that God is severe towards you? You know, God's tough on you. Yeah, Lord, man, you're so nice to everybody else. Man, you're tough on me, God.

You don't know what tough is. If you could only pull back the veil and see the workings of God behind the scene, you would be absolutely amazed at the generosity of God's towards you. God is so generous.

So patient with us, he was towards Nebuchadnezzar. And there's Nebuchadnezzar crying out, is this not great Babylon? By the way, Babylon was one of the spectacular cities of the ancient world. You ever hear the seven wonders of the world? What was one of them? The hanging gardens of Babylon built by Nebuchadnezzar.

Matter of fact, when you go and see the excavations from the city of Babylon and some of the things that they have in the British Museum and other places, most of the bricks found in the excavation of the city of Babylon carry this stamp on them. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, supporter of a Galatia and Isidia, exalted firstborn son of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, that was engraved on every brick. It was all built to his glory, to his honor, to his own worship and friends.

God doesn't like sharing his glory. He doesn't like sharing his honor with anybody else. There's an old story about Alexander, the great Alexander, the great was riding along, I don't know, in a battle or on some

parade or something.

I don't know the details, but he was riding by some pool of water and Alexander was wearing his crown, his royal crown, and the crown fell off of his head and it rolled into the water. Well, there was a soldier who went into the water and got the crown out and gave it back to Alexander and Alexander praised him highly. But then he found out when the soldier was out of Alexander's sight that he put Alexander's crown upon his head.

You know, just who could resist, right? Man, wonder what this feels like when Alexander heard that he had the man killed. You don't put my crown on your head. That's my crown.

Well, that's the glory of God. It belongs to him alone. We don't touch it.

It's his business. It's his crown. It's his honor and glory.

So what happened? The promise was fulfilled. They said they're going to drive you for men. You're going to eat grass like oxen.

This is exactly what happened. Verse thirty three. That very hour, the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar.

He was driven from men and ate grass like oxen. His body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagle's feathers and his nails like bird's claws. Said this was going to be in the state for seven years.

You know, there's actually a medical condition known as well. Some people call it insania. Zoanthropia.

Man, that's a mouthful. Zoanthropia. More specifically, in Nebuchadnezzar's case, they call it boanthropy.

The delusion that you're an ox. And people suffer from these things from time to time. Delusion that they're a dog.

Delusion that they're a bear. Delusion that there's some other animal. And they go around acting like that animal.

Different commentators quote different people have actually had cases very similar like this. But Nebuchadnezzar, for seven years, was absolutely convinced that he was an ox and he lived like an ox outdoors, refusing to dress, refusing to cut his hair, just eating grass. And he was driven from men and he ate grass like oxen, the text say.

Now, when you go into the secular historical records of Babylon, you find no record of this seven year period of insanity. Surprise, surprise. Friends, it is entirely in keeping with the character of ancient kings and their historians that there is no way that they would record such a thing.

Nevertheless. A Boudinus, a Greek historian, wrote in 268 B.C. that Nebuchadnezzar, for a time, was possessed by some god and that he had immediately disappeared for a period of time. Can you imagine him in the secret walls of the palace in the interior courtyard? Who's that running around like a crazy man on all fours? We don't talk about that.

You didn't see that. Well, who's running the kingdom? Well, you know, we have this regent and this lord and they're running things around. Nobody really knows what to do, but they're running things.

But don't talk about that. It's also interesting that there's a seven year period of Babylonian history where there's no record of official decrees or any such thing of Nebuchadnezzar. Many critics imagine a whole set of ingenious ways to try to say that this didn't happen, but the historical evidence is absolutely persuasive.

This really happened. Friends, you don't even really have to go to the historical evidence. You know that this is how God works in lives.

Well, I'm not saying reducing us to the state of animals. But you know that if you don't humble yourself under the hand of God, he will humble you. Nebuchadnezzar was given the opportunity to humble himself and he didn't.

And God humbled him and the experience was much more severe than it would have been, than if Nebuchadnezzar would have humbled himself. That's why the Bible tells you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. You do it.

Don't make the Lord force it upon you. No, but friends, if we do it, then God will bless us and raise us up. Well, let's look at how the chapter ends here.

Verse 34. At the end of the time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven and my understanding returned to me. And I blessed the most high and praised and honored him who lives forever.

What you notice when that happened at the end of the time, Nebuchadnezzar could not break free from his madness until God appointed the end of the time. It's not like this was just a decision he could make. Well, I'll stop being insane now.

No, God had a time appointed for this. And then when the time was over, then Nebuchadnezzar had the opportunity to lift his eyes to heaven and to humble himself. You see, Nebuchadnezzar knew that the God that we serve, he doesn't just exist.

Friends, he reigns. He doesn't want anybody else wearing his crown. So what did he do? Verse 34.

Again, I blessed the most high and praised and honored him who lives forever. Nebuchadnezzar could only see the truth about himself when he saw the truth about God. And when he saw God for who he was, a great sovereign ruling in the heavens, when he saw God for who he was, then his sanity was returned.

And friends, I might say that if somebody doesn't see God for who he is, you might say that they're spiritually insane. They just don't know. They just can't see.

One commentator likened it as a sort of a brilliant sort of lesson. He said people are like moles. They're brilliant and they can work underground and they can burrow and tunnel.

And they're very great dexterity and great ability under the ground, on the earth, under the earth. They do all these great things, but they get out into the sunlight and it blinds them. Oh, yes.

Oh, you can do a lot of great things in the world. Until you have your heart changed by God, you're blind when the sun shines. Now, I want to notice what happened in Nebuchadnezzar's life when reason

returned to him.

Well, the first thing that happened was worship. Did you see that there? I bless the most high and praised and honored him who lives forever for his dominion is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing.

He does according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain his hand or say to him, what have you done? At the same time, my reason returned to me and for the glory of my kingdom. My honor and my splendor returned to me.

My counselors and nobles resorted to me and I was restored to my kingdom and excellent majesty was added to me. Now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the king of heaven, all of whose works are truth and his ways justice. And those who walk in pride, he is able to abase.

Well, when Nebuchadnezzar's reason returned, it resulted in worship. In worship. You know, if you really are a reasonable person.

You will worship God and worship him mightily in the ancient world. They would depict something artistically. If it was highly intelligent, they would give it more eyes.

Like a third eye or a fourth eye, something like that, because the eyes are the windows in which we receive knowledge. And so if you have a lot of eyes, you can take in a lot of you're very wise, you're very smart. Well, the book of Revelation describes for us the cherubim that surround God's throne.

They're covered with eyes front and back. That's how intelligent they are. I mean, they're probably smarter than any ten thousand human beings put together.

And what do these angels do in the presence of God day and night? They do worship. Now, the return of reason also resulted in prayer because Nebuchadnezzar cried out to God. And friends, if we believe what Nebuchadnezzar believed about God, it's going to show in our prayer life.

Do you believe that God is a mighty God? Do you believe that God can change the heart of other people? You know, sometimes we don't believe that. Well, you know, it's just up to them. They're not putting much point in praying about it one way or the other.

Friends, let me tell you, God can change that person's heart. He can do it. Problem is, you don't trust God enough.

Or maybe there's sin or compromise in your life that's hindering your prayer life. Or maybe you're not sensitive enough to know God's will and you're praying for something against his will. But don't you doubt it for a moment.

God is able to change the human heart. We know that God can change the heart of man, the course of rivers, the flow of oceans, the distribution of resources, the assignments of angels. When we understand that, we will pray more.

Well, if you notice here, it was all restored to Nebuchadnezzar. Verse 36 describes that. And this shows that God wanted to restore Nebuchadnezzar.

You know, the goal wasn't to bring Nebuchadnezzar low, but to bring him to his proper place before God and among men. Nebuchadnezzar learned, as it says at the very end of the chapter, that those who walk in pride, he is able to put down. Friends, again, we talked about being a witness and testimony.

This is knowledgeable testimony from a direct source. You can learn from Nebuchadnezzar's testimony. You don't have to live through a similar thing because you can learn the abiding lesson.

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. So why don't you have God's grace flowing in your life? Maybe you're too proud to confess your sin. Maybe you're too proud to come forward for prayer.

Maybe you're too proud to just recognize that you're a weak person who needs discipleship from someone else. If you will genuinely humble yourself, you'll see the goddess for you. I also want you to see that this shows us that God will glorify himself among the nations.

You know, when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, he took the treasures of the temple, not all of them, but many of them, and carried them back and put them in the temples of his God. It was Nebuchadnezzar's way of saying, I am mightier than the gods of Judah. Now look at him.

The God of Judah was well able to put Nebuchadnezzar in his place. Can you let the Lord do that to you? Can you be a witness of what God has done in your life and testify of it to someone else? That's exactly what Daniel chapter four is. It's Nebuchadnezzar's testimony.

You've got a testimony. Have you been blessed? Have you learned something from Nebuchadnezzar's testimony? Somebody that you run circles with every day, you rub shoulders with probably all the time. They can benefit from hearing your Daniel chapter four, your testimony of what God has done in your life.

The best part of it is that I believe that God's work in your life, the best is yet to come. You know, as you come into a greater understanding of what it is to really surrender to God and really be filled with the spirit, the best is yet to come. You have even greater testimony to give to God's great works.

Let's pray together right now.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10744.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-guzik/daniel-the-fall-and-rise-of-nebuchadnezzar/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net