

Mid Week • Daniel 4

INTRODUCTION

Daniel 4 is an extremely interesting passage!

When we think of Daniel though, we usually don't think of the story this chapter tells.

We think of Daniel 2 and the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

We think of chapter 3 and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the fiery furnace.

Or we think of the handwriting on the wall or Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks.

This chapter is important because it tells us about the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, to genuine faith in God.

It is also one of the Bible's most clear diagnosis of the problem of pride and how to overcome it.

TEXT

¹Nebuchadnezzar the king,

To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you.

² I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.

³ How great are His signs,

And how mighty His wonders!

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,

And His dominion is from generation to generation.

The first thing we need to note about this chapter is the manner in which it is presented; notice the print – how it is formatted.

If your bible follows the format of most modern translations you'll note that the text is laid out in an *indented* fashion; but not in the style of indentation used to depict poetry.

The reason for this is because the text here isn't poetic.

It's a kind of free-verse that seeks to depict an Aramaic inscription or proclamation – for that is precisely what this is - a royal proclamation sent to the four corners of the Babylonian Empire.

As we learn from the end of the chapter, this is Nebuchadnezzar's personal testimony of how he came to faith in Yahweh, the Most High God.

Vs. 1-3 are the introduction to the royal proclamation and they follow the style used in that day for just this sort of thing.

1) First the King gives his name as the one issuing the statement

2) Then who it is addressed to, in this case, all the citizens of his territories

- 3) Then there is the classic Oriental greeting of peace.
- 4) Finally he summarizes what he wants to say to them – he wants to give his testimony to the power and wisdom of God.

Nebuchadnezzar had been confronted with the power of God again and again:

- 1) First with Daniel’s ability to tell his dream and then interpret it.
- 2) Then in the deliverance of the three Jewish men from the furnace
- 3) And now in the events of this chapter.

The king could see that these were not merely chances circumstances or flukes of nature,

These were direct evidences of the power and wisdom of God.

All of this combined to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar that God is sovereign over the affairs of earth.

And that’s the *theme* of the Book of Daniel.

The lesson of each of these chapters is God’s sovereignty over the affairs of man.

This chapter will teach that lesson in the life and testimony of the world’s greatest despot of that age.

Now he sets the scene for what happened . . .

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. ⁵I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. ⁶Therefore 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. ⁷Then 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.

Nebuchadnezzar has another dream.

But this time, it is so troubling, so unsettling it caused him to grow *exceedingly* fearful, as the words of the original text convey.

So he calls in the scholars, called here “magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.”

We need to understand that these were all titles given to the people of that time who were considered to be the repositories of knowledge – so we would call them the *experts*, the *scholars*.

People of the ancient world, and specially the Babylonians put much stock in dreams.

And there were people who were trained in dream interpretation.

These are the guys who are brought in now.

Unlike before, when Nebuchadnezzar didn’t tell them the dream but made them tell him what it was first so he could be sure they had the ability to interpret it accurately, he goes ahead and tells them what he dreamt.

Notice the reaction of the scholars – they didn’t tell him the interpretation.

It doesn’t say they *didn’t* know what it was – it’s possible they did as we’ll see in a moment.

But for some reason, they didn’t tell him what it meant. They remained silent.

Again why they refused to talk we’ll see in just a moment.

⁸But 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), and I told the dream before him, saying: ⁹“Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God *is* in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.

Daniel didn't appear with the first set of guys because quiet frankly, his office as chief administrator of the kingdom meant he would have been busy elsewhere and there were plenty of guys who could take care of this little piece of dream interpretation for the king.

But when they are silent and the king expresses his concern and displeasure, word reaches Daniel and he comes before the King.

Notice how Daniel is described by Nebuchadnezzar here: the “chief of the magicians” although, again, we ought to equate this to *scholars*.

As chief of the magicians, Daniel's position was much like the *Grand Vizier* – the Chief Counselor to the throne and the one who actually oversaw much of the day-to-day affairs and policy of the court and kingdom.

Both of Daniel's names are given in this official proclamation.

Nebuchadnezzar calls him by his real, Hebrew name, in recognition of his identity as a Jew who worships Yahweh, and by his official court name in Aramaic, Belteshazzar, which means Bel – Protect his life.

Bel was the chief deity of Babylon, also known as Marduk.

Marduk was his real name while Bel meant “lord” or “master.”

Nebuchadnezzar refers to him by his Babylonian name because that's the name he was *known by* in the kingdom and this was a proclamation being sent *to* the kingdom.

What's striking is the king's confession that Daniel is indwelt by the Spirit of the Holy God.

He sees Daniel's God as worthy of the designation “Holy.”

Holy is certainly not a term he would have attached to the gods of Babylon.

Marduk, Ishtar, Ea, and all the rest of the many deities worshiped in

Babylon might have been *powerful* but they certainly weren't holy!

Really, they were nothing but expressions of human desire and talent raised to an infinite level.

The gods of Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome were nothing more than expressions and extensions of human desire.

While incredibly powerful, they tended to be petty, jealous, filled with bitterness when slighted, and whimsical.

So while they were exalted over mere human in terms of power, they merely used that extra power to grab for their own selfish lusts.

Holiness was not something anyone would attribute to the gods of Babylon.

When Nebuchadnezzar calls Yahweh the *Holy God*, he is admitting a fundamental difference between the deities of the Babylonian pantheon and the God of Israel.

Daniel's God is a separate God – He is a cut above the other deities men worship.

He is pure, unstained by moral failure.
He is perfect!

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,
And its height was great.

11 The tree grew and became strong;
Its height reached to the heavens,
And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.

12 Its leaves *were* lovely,
Its fruit abundant,
And in it was food 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.

13 “I saw in the visions of my head *while* on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. ¹⁴He cried aloud and said thus:

‘Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,
Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.
Let the beasts get out from under it,
And the birds from its branches.

15 Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth,
Bound with a band of iron and bronze,
In 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.

16 Let his heart be changed from *that of* a man,
Let him be given the heart of a beast,
And let seven times ^⓪ pass over him.

17 ‘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 over it the lowest of men.’

Now, tell me, as we've read this so far, what is your immediate reaction?

Does this turn out well – does this dream look like a happy or sad one?

Is blessing or judgment determined for the central figure of this dream?

This gives us a clue as to why the wise men of Babylon held their words back.

You see this image of a tree was a familiar one to the ancient world, and being as learned as they were, they had to know the tree represented either Babylon in general or Nebuchadnezzar in particular.

Both in the OT and in many extra-biblical inscriptions from this period, we

know that rulers were likened to spreading trees. [\[1\]](#)

In Ezekiel 31 the Assyrians and the Egyptians Pharaoh are called cedars of Lebanon.

In much ancient literature from the orient, the rise and fall of rulers is depicted by the symbol of a growing or chopped down tree.

The Persians in particular liked this image to represent human power. [\[2\]](#)

This helps explain why Nebuchadnezzar was so worked up over this dream – even he grasped something of the significance of it.

And when the wise men heard it, they realized its interpretation might get them in a whole lot of trouble with the powerful, impetuous, and easily angered Nebuchadnezzar.

So they zipped their mouths and played dumb.

18 “This dream I, King 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 *are* able, for the Spirit of the Holy God *is* in you.”

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 interpretation concern your enemies!

Daniel did know what it meant and was shocked at it!

Like the others, he was reluctant to speak out, but for an altogether different reason.

Daniel was not fearful for his life – he demonstrates that amply in these chapters.

No, Daniel hesitated because he had come to a settled, deep, and abiding loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar.

And he knew that this would cause him much emotional pain – so he hesitated.

Nebuchadnezzar could see the struggle on his trusted counselors face and encouraged him to tell him what it meant.

Daniel began with a wish that what the dream meant might not be applied to the King but to his enemies instead!

That last line of v. 20 reveals to us the kind of heart Daniel had toward Nebuchadnezzar.

Look at it again . . .

“My lord, *may* the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!”

Daniel was a man of such high integrity that he would not have said this as a merely political or self-defensive remark.

He meant this, and it shows the loyalty and affection he had developed for Nebuchadnezzar.

Knowing something of Daniel’s character and his devotion to God in prayer, I can’t help but believe that he had been praying for Nebuchadnezzar’s conversion.

Chapter 4 is the record of God answering those prayers – though through a means Daniel would not have picked if he had had a say in the matter.

We’ll come back to this thought latter.

Now for the interpretation . . .

20 “The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which *could be seen by all the earth*, ²¹whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home —²²it 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.

23 “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 in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him’; ²⁴this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: ²⁵They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts 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.

Indeed, just as suspected, the tree represented Nebuchadnezzar.

He had led the armies and foreign policy of Babylon to total domination of the ancient Middle East.

There wasn’t an area of that part of the world, what was considered by them to be the *known* or *civilized* world, that wasn’t under his influence. But the day would come when the tree’s branches would reach too high and would lift themselves up in pride and as a result, the tree would be brought low.

It was the judgment of heaven, via the agency of an angel, that the tree would be cut down, it’s branches lopped off and it’s leaves and fruit stripped away.

But the tree will not be completely uprooted – a living stump will be left in the ground.

This stump will be encompassed with a metal band.

This band isn’t really given an interpretation, but it seems to point to some kind of iron-clad *bondage* that can’t be broken away from – it’s part of the divine judgment that is to fall on the tree.

The image takes a dramatic and jarring turn at the end of v. 23 where the tree is

suddenly spoken of in terms of a person.

23 “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 in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him’;

Even in the dream itself in vs. 15 & 16, the watchers, the angels who were the agents carrying out this judgment of God on the tree reveal that the tree is symbolic of a man.

And just like a stump is rooted to the ground and abides outdoors where the dew settles on it in the wee hours of the morning, and the sun beats down on it in the middle of the day – so this man, the king of Babylon will be driven away from the normal habitation of people to live like an animal in the fields where he will eat grass like an ox.

The length of time for this judgment is given as 7 “times;” the Aramaic word “times” being an obscure one, but most scholars take it to mean *years*.

So Daniel interprets the dream to mean that Nebuchadnezzar will fall from power, will become insane and will be driven into the fields to live like an animal.

But this won’t last forever – it will end after 7 years.

The lesson Nebuchadnezzar has to learn is this; end of v. 25

. . . Till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

Nebuchadnezzar had to learn that God is sovereign – not Nebuchadnezzar!

As soon as he learned that lesson, he would be restored.

26 “And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump *and* roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules.

Now, hard on the heels of the interpretation, Daniel is going to offer some advice .

27 Therefore, O king, let my advice 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.”

Daniel sees genuine repentance as the way to avoid the judgment the dream portrays.

If Nebuchadnezzar will do two things:

- 1) *Repent* and be *converted*, which is what it means to break off sins and being righteous
- 2) Showing *mercy* to the *disadvantaged*.

You see, the power of his exalted position had gone to his head and he had come to see himself as above the moral rule that governed everyone else’s life.

Friends - wealth and power can be horribly corrupting influences.

Wealth opens many doors to pleasure a lack of wealth sees closed.

And once a person embarks on a pursuit of pleasure as the meaning of life, it becomes a one-way ticket to destruction.

The power of position also is a magnet for all sorts of evil in the guise of

pleasure and fulfillment.

The human soul is drawn toward power like a moth to the light.

You see, God originally created us in His image and that means we had incredible potential.

Then He gave us dominion and authority over all the earth.

That was part of our original place and identity.

But when Humanity fell in the Garden of Eden, we lost that dominion and authority.

And now, we experience this monumental ache and emptiness.

We know we were born for more than this, and the vacuum that was once filled with our God-ordained and delegated power to be His representatives on Earth cries out to be filled.

God intends that that need would move us to seek Him and see it re-filled in our new identity and authority in Christ.

But our fallenness moves us instead to manufacture our own fallen and corrupt forms of power – political power, physical power, the power of position, the power that comes from owning lots of stuff or having lots of money.

Sometimes it's seen in something as crass and materialistic as a fast car or a faster computer.

Nebuchadnezzar sat at the top of temporal power – and it corrupted him because that is not the kind of power humans were created for.

We were created for the power *God gives* – not the kind the *world gives*.

His power sanctifies and makes us holy – the world's power corrupts us and makes us evil.

So Daniel counsels him to repent, to break away from the corruptions his wealth acquired for him, and then to use his political position and power in the service of those he was normally inclined to despise – the powerless and disadvantaged.

How would the king respond?

28 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. 29At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. 30The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"

One year after having the dream and getting its interpretation, it happened.

It seems that for several months Nebuchadnezzar had made an attempt at following Daniel's counsel, but because his heart wasn't right, because he hadn't had a genuine conversion, his attempts at reform fell short and he reverted to form – the proud king of mighty Babylon.

One day, while walking through his palace, he looked around and had a moment of supreme arrogance.

The only way we can grasp what Nebuchadnezzar is experiencing here is by understanding just what he was looking at as he said this.

Nebuchadnezzar had devoted his life to building and beautifying the city of Babylon.

It's hard for us to imagine just how incredibly extensive and how absolutely beautiful the city was.

It encompassed 6 sq. miles behind massive walls!

The city walls were made of two separate walls, all of which were surrounded by a deep moat filled with water.

The Euphrates River ran right through the center of the city so that there was an ample supply of water for drinking and irrigation.

Gorgeous temples to the chief Babylonian gods were set up throughout the city.

Massive fortifications were also based around the city to ensure its protection.

And over it all, there was the unmistakable print of Nebuchadnezzar's campaign to make the city of showcase of his wealth and power.

This was done with the use of enameled bricks.

They were painted blue and gold and then covered with enamel so that they would weather better and present a façade that was unparalleled in the ancient world.

When his wife, the Queen expressed her nostalgia for the landscape of her home, he constructed the Hanging Gardens across from his vast palace so that when she looked out her window she would see some hills covered with the plants of her native region.

A continuous line of slaves filled pitchers from the river and carried them up walkways and ladders to empty them on the gardens.

When archaeologists unearthed the Ishtar Gate at the beginning of the century, they were stunned to discover both the size of the gate and the blue enameled bricks that made it up.

And this is just what Nebuchadnezzar did in the capital city.

He did many more building and beautification projects throughout his empire.

So here he is, walking through his sumptuous palace, perhaps looking out his window over the span of the city.

He sees the walls and the Ishtar Gate; the Hanging Gardens are on one side, and the towering temple to Bel, the E-sagila rises up off in the distance, in the middle of the city.

On the streets below him are hundreds and thousands of people going about their business, and he thinks to himself,

"I made all this! I rule over all those little ants down there! I'm really special!"

"Who is like ME?"

31 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! ³²And they shall drive you from men, and 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 gives it to whomever He chooses."

33 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 eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

Into the midst of his arrogant reverie came the judgment from heaven foretold a year before.

In that very hour, Nebuchadnezzar went stark raving mad!

This is nothing less than insanity and is called *boanthropy*.

It's a rare mental condition in which a person acts just like an animal.

It seems that Nebuchadnezzar dropped to all fours and began to act as a wild, not tame creature of the field.

So he was ushered by the people of the palace out to the fields.

Now, based on what we read later, it's reasonable to assume they didn't just kick him out of the city and leave him to the whim of the common people.

There were extensive gardens inside the palace grounds and this is likely where they placed him.

His behavior was so bizarre and anti-social there was nothing for him but to leave him outdoors for 7 years.

All during this time, as is consistent with boanthropy, he acted like an animal, eating grass, and seeing his appearance altered to reflect someone who is outdoors in 110 and humid conditions during the summer and below freezing conditions at night in the winter.

His hair grew long and matted, like dreadlocks and his fingernails toughened up and lengthened to become like claws.

Being like this he could have been a musician in Bob Marley's band.

This description of him implies a 7 year period as opposed to 7 weeks, or even months.

QUESTION: If Nebuchadnezzar went insane and was so manifestly unfit to rule, while didn't they just depose him and set up a new king?

Were was the crown prince, Evil-Merodoch?

More than likely, Nebuchadnezzar's son did in fact take the throne at this time, but only as a figurehead.

There was a great reluctance to replace Nebuchadnezzar because he commanded both great fear on the part of some and great loyalty on the part of others.

And since Daniel was the chief administrator of the kingdom and the Grand Vizier, it meant that the daily life of the court could go on without much interruption.

Daniel had also told them that Nebuchadnezzar would be restored after 7 years and they just needed to wait.

Remember, all this happened to Nebuchadnezzar because he had a lesson to learn, as is repeated in v. 32

. . . seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."

As soon as Nebuchadnezzar had come to own this truth, he would be delivered from his insanity and restored to his position.

34 **And 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:**

**For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom is from generation to generation.**

**35 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?"**

**36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom,
my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me,
I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. ³⁷Now 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
put down.**

When the time was up, the 7 years, the lesson was complete and Nebuchadnezzar's
sanity was restored to him.

He rose up, changed his form of living, and gave glory to God.

What we find at the end of the chapter is genuine worship from a converted heart.

Up to this point, the knowledge of God Nebuchadnezzar had was only partial.

He knew God was all-wise and able to interpret dreams.

He also knew God was very powerful and able to protect His people.

From his first dream he also knew that God had a great plan for history and
would triumph in the end.

But all of this was only an intellectual knowledge for Nebuchadnezzar.

He failed to see how this God of Daniel and his friends wanted a
personal relationship with him.

So Nebuchadnezzar lived his life as most people live their lives – acknowledging
there is a God out there, but so what?!?

How does that have anything to do with me?

He got up every day like everyone else, and sought to deal with life through his
own resources, wisdom and strength.

Because of his unique position, his pride swelled until he came to truly think he
was totally independent and in need of nothing he himself could provide.

It was at that point that God broke in and showed him what an absolute fiction
that kind of thinking is.

Look at the last phrase of the chapter:

And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

You know what the essence of pride is? Independence!

Pride means to think that I live for and to myself.

Think about it: when did Lucifer fall, what was the kernel of his sin?

When he grew *prideful*.

And what was that – he decided to leave his task as the anointed cherub
who covers and set his own agenda as one who deserved to rule in the

place of God.

In other words, he would no longer define himself in terms of his relationship to God but instead to his own plans.

When did Man fall?

When he decided to turn from his dependence on God and relationship with Him and strike out on his own pursuit of deity; really, it was a desiring after independence.

Friends, that's the essence of pride.

It is the rejection of our God-ordained place or defining ourselves in terms of our relationship with Him and seeking to be *independent*, answering to no one but our own plans and purposes.

We see it supremely in Nebuchadnezzar here, and we see that the end of his judgment came with his realizing his utter and complete dependence on God.

Once he came to that knowledge, his sanity was returned to him, he was set free of the bondage of mental illness and he was restored to his position as a honored and beloved king.

But now, in the midst of his dependence on God, his mouth is filled with continual praise!

CONCLUSION

Pride is the root of all sin.

And pride is nothing more than claiming independence from God.

Friends, this is spiritual insanity and as long as a person lives in pride, they are insane!

They have lost their humanity and live at the level of an animal, just like Nebuchadnezzar.

Given enough time they will start to look like an animal.

God wants us to be sane – He wants us to know that as human beings, were are made to be dependent on Him and that casting ourselves in complete surrender and abandon on Him is the most sane thing we can do.

As we do that, we become *more*, not *less* human.

God wants us to be so dependent on Him we are like little children.

This is why Jesus said that to come to God we must come like little kids.

Young children have no trouble whatever admitting their *total dependence* on their parents, and they trust their parents *implicitly* to take care of them.

Cast yourself on God!

Celebrate your dependence on Him, just like Nebuchadnezzar did here.

You know, praise is an expression of humility.

The proud do not praise others because they are too hung up about whether or not they are being honored and exalted.

Praise is a wonderful way of expressing our dependence on God because we are saying He IS God and we are not.

Proverbs reminds us more than once that pride goes before destruction and a

haughty spirit before a fall.
Daniel 4 is a bold lesson in that direction.
And it is a stern warning that to be proud is to be blind.
My friend, God is sovereign – not you!
If not for God, you are nothing more than 94 cents worth of chemicals and
about 10 gallons of water.
But because of God, you are stamped with the image of eternity and are a
vessel in which the glory of heaven dwells.
As Paul wrote to the Corinthians – what do you have that you have not
received?
The answer – nothing!
If therefore you *received* it, why do you glory as though it arose from
within you?
It is all and only God's grace that has done anything worth anything in you.
So praise Him, and humble yourself!

I mentioned earlier that there's little doubt Daniel was praying for
Nebuchadnezzar's conversion.
I doubt Daniel had any idea the king's conversion would take this path.
But you know what – this is the only path Nebuchadnezzar could have
traveled to be converted.
His pride was such that it required this kind of humbling.
His pride was so iron-clad, like those bands on that stump, that it took
seven years for them to rust through.
Would Daniel have prayed for his conversion if he had known it would have taken
this to break him?
More than likely, because the prophet knew that in God's eyes nothing is more
important than a man's soul!
Even though the entire empire would be plunged into a 7 year season of
difficulty while the king lay insane.
Even though Nebuchadnezzar's family would have to go through the emotional
torment of watching their husband and father acting like a brute animal.
All of this was worth it if it meant a man would pass from death to life.

Like Daniel, we need to hold up the lost before the throne of grace and ask the
Lord to save them.
Then we need to be prepared for what the answer to those prayers may mean.

[1] 2 Kings 14:9 Psalm 1:3 37:35 52:8 92:12 Ezekiel 17 31

[2] Astyages & Xerxes