

Daniel 4
What Hurts Me Heals Me
What humbles Me Helps Me
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: Would you bow your heads and join with me in a word of prayer? Lord, we thank You so much for this time that we get to come in the middle of the week, Lord, and just sit here and, Lord, receive Your word.

Would You give us a focus this evening that we may not be distracted, and may You speak to us, Lord, in Your word? We thank You so much for this time together. Bless this time. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. Good evening to you. God bless you. You can be seated. Welcome. Glad you're here.

Are you glad you're here?

[Congregation says, "Yes!"]

Those of you online, we're also glad you're joining with us, whatever the time zone is. If you're on the East Coast, it's after midnight. You should probably go to bed. You can watch this later.

All right, *Daniel Chapter 4* tonight. What an interesting chapter as we're about to see. Before we tackle this chapter, though, I have to tell you, by way of full disclosure that I totally stole this title from my pastor. So I just needed to let you know, being fully transparent, that he reminded me of this actually, in a recent phone conversation.

We were talking, and he said this again. I thought, wait a minute. Anything that hurts me heals me. Anything that humbles me helps me. Thank you. I got my title for Thursday night's Bible study right there, and here's why.

The reason for that is what we're about to see is exactly that, such that King Nebuchadnezzar is both humbled and healed. However, he first has to experience what the Proverbs say concerning the wounds of a friend being faithful — what hurts me helps me — and pride coming before, not the fall, destruction. Remember?

Let's clear this up because this is an issue that needs to be cleared up. We've talked about it before. I think it's worthy of repeating tonight in the context of this chapter that we have before us tonight. It's not pride comes before the fall. **"A haughty spirit comes before a fall." "Pride comes before destruction."** And that is precisely what is going to happen to King Nebuchadnezzar in exalting himself. **"God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble."**

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Now, before we jump in, we'll pray. But I want to just kind of give you just a quick timestamp on *Chapter 4* because there has been, it's believed, approximately 30 years since *Chapter 3*, the events of *Chapter 3* with the seven times hotter fiery furnace.

Now, 30 years have passed between *Chapter 3* and *Chapter 4*. So Daniel, now — I'll get this right this time — is likely in his early 50s. 30 years has passed, and we're going to see this here in a moment.

Now, why is that important? Because during that time, there has been a friendship that has been developed between Daniel and King Nebuchadnezzar. And that's going to be germane to our understanding of what we're about to see, which is really quite mind blowing, if I can say it like that, for lack of a better way of saying it. So let's pray and then we'll jump in.

Father, thank You. Lord, thank You for this unusual chapter here in Your word. This is one of those chapters in our Bibles that we have to ask ourselves why we even have it in our Bibles. And Lord, it's here for a reason. It's a sharp turning of a corner from what we saw in the previous chapter, and what we're going to see in the next chapter.

But Lord, there's something here in this chapter that You want to speak into our lives concerning, especially when it comes to pride and those who love us enough to wound us, speak to us the truth in love because of love. Lord, thank You for Daniel's example in doing so.

So Lord, there's so much here. And unless the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to it, we're going to miss it, we won't see it. And none of us want that. That's why we're here, Lord. So show us what You want us to see. Speak to us what You want us to hear and receive and heed. In Jesus' name. Amen.

All right. *Verse 1* **“Nebuchadnezzar the king...”**

Stop. You mean he's writing this?

Yeah.

Wait, what? Daniel's not writing this?

No. This chapter is written by Nebuchadnezzar, the king?

Yeah.

Well, this is going to be interesting.

It most certainly is. **“Nebuchadnezzar the king, to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.”**

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Whoa! That sounds like Peter or Jude. Peace be multiplied to you. That sounds like something a Christian would say. Verse 2 **"I thought it good to** [*Share with you my 'But God Testimony'*]

[Laughter]

[*Good. You laughed. Thank you*] [*That's actually what this is*] **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."**

[*Now here's my testimony*] Verse 4. Here's what God did in bringing me to Him and to that realization. It's pretty dramatic. It was (Chuckle) pretty intense. God had to humble me. And boy, did He. But it brought me to Him and my acknowledging of Him, salvation in Him.

I know there is debate amongst Bible teachers and Bible commentators as to the authenticity of King Nebuchadnezzar's salvation here. But I think the text really does speak to the fact that he had a genuine experience of salvation in the God of Israel. And I'll point out as we go along, the reasons for that and the reasons that I truly believe we're going to see King Nebuchadnezzar in heaven. How amazing is that?

One reason, just right out of the chute, is if this were not genuine, I don't think we would have his testimony recorded for us in the pages of Holy Writ. Right? I mean, why — I mean, okay — the question — this is one of those chapters — why do we have this in our Bibles? Because it is a powerful testimony of a powerful king who was humbled and was saved. Okay, that's why.

Now, if that's why we have this chapter in our Bibles, then wouldn't it stand to reason that we would not have a chapter like this in our Bibles if this were not genuine? Why would God inspire this as Scripture, inspired Scripture, included in this amazing *Book of Daniel*, which is not a long book, by the way. That does not mean it will not take us a long time to get through this book, by the way. Just so you know. So we're clear.

I cannot see any reason that God would include a chapter like this in our Bibles if this were not genuine. Agreed? Okay, so we're off to a good start. Of course, you're going to say that, if for no other reason other than to get me to move on, which I will. So here's his testimony.

"I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace."

Now, this is why the 30 years going by is of importance because everything is done now. All the palaces and temples have been built. Those massive walls have been built. The Hanging Gardens,

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one of the Seven Wonders of the World were there, complete, to be enjoyed. The work's all been done. And now you can just kick back, and as they say, enjoy the fruits of your labors. It's actually not your labors — the slave labor that you employed mercilessly.

So this is where he's at. I mean, he is at the top of his game. He's got it made in the shade. He's got everything he wants, and now he's just flourishing and enjoying everything that he has. And he has everything. So he's at rest, kicking back.

Verse 5, "I saw a dream which made me afraid."

That's quite a disparity between *verse 4* and *verse 5*. I would have been happy if I'm Nebuchadnezzar. Of course this is what's going to bring him to salvation. But I would have been very happy if it ended with *verse 4* — and I lived happily ever after. And then God's like, well, actually, it's going to be déjà vu all over again, to quote that great theologian, Yogi Berra.

"I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me."

We're going to see that expression a couple more times. I don't know if Kaponi — thoughts on my bed, visions of my head — you can do something with that, maybe? I don't know, it's biblical.

[Laughter]

So verse 6, "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."

Oh, wait, didn't we just do this like, I don't know how many, 30-plus years ago? Yeah, but it's different this time.

Verse 7. "Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream."

Why? You didn't do that last time. He wanted to make them tell you what the dream was first before they interpreted it. Well, this time, apparently, you're going to go ahead and tell them what the dream is. But I want you to pay particular attention to the way this is worded because it's going to come up again in a moment. **"But they did not make known to me its interpretation."**

Okay. Notice it doesn't say they could not make known to me its interpretation. In other words, they could have interpreted it, but they chose not to. Why? Because they didn't want to tell

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Nebuchadnezzar the truth of what this dream meant because it meant his destruction because of his pride, which always leads to destruction. No exception.

So before I move on to *verse 8*, I should probably make mention of this principle here. There's a takeaway here, and I think all of us, myself included, would do well to take heed to it.

There does come a time in our lives where God will put someone in our lives that we need to speak the truth to, no matter how hard it's going to be for them to hear it. We don't do that. It's probably one of the most disobeyed commands in all of Scripture: to speak the truth. If you really love them and care about them, then you're going to speak the truth to them. If you don't, you must not love them.

I remember many years ago on the mainland — of course, I always use examples from the church I planted on the mainland — but I remember this brother that came up to me. And there was always this, you know, combative, argumentative dynamic in the conversations we'd have. And he was so full of himself. And I know what being full of yourself is because I know what — I have a Ph.D. in pride, you know it takes one to know one kind of thing?

So I know somebody's full of pride. Why? Because I have a Ph.D. in pride, and I can identify it. You know, I can see that speck of pride in your eye because I've got the telephone pole of pride in my eye from where that speck came from. So I can identify it. I know it. I'm very familiar with it. I know what it smells like, what it looks like, what it sounds like, what it talks like, what it walks like.

So I just, I'm look at this guy going, wow, does nobody love you? Have you nobody in your life that is willing to speak truth to you about the path you're on, the path of pride that leads to destruction?

Does nobody care enough about you to bring this to your attention? Because clearly it's a blind spot.

That's one thing about pride. It blinds you to the fact that you're proud. I liken it — I use — I need to find a better illustration, but I liken it to these anti-virus softwares on your computer that detect a virus. Well, some of these viruses now are so sophisticated that they disable the anti-virus software that detects it, and then it destroys the hard drive and the files, corrupts them.

Well, that's what pride does. Pride disables your anti-pride detection software so that you can't detect it. You're full of pride. And people who are — again, I have a Ph.D. I can — I promise you I'm an expert when it comes to pride. And so are you too, by the way, so don't look at me all spiritual.

I know pride. I know pride. I'm very humble about my pride.

[Laughter]

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And of course, I'm very proud of my humility as well. But the one thing I know, and I'll speak for myself in my own life, when I'm harboring an attitude of pride, without exception, I am unaware of it because the pride has blinded me to it. It has disabled me to the reality of just how proud I really am. It desensitizes you. It deceives you. It blinds you.

So I said to this guy, and I — and he looked at me, and I knew it was, you know — **“Don't answer a fool according to his folly, [You know] lest you become like him.”** Then the next verse says, **“Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he become wise in his own eyes.”**

Those are not contradictory. It's basically saying don't lower yourself to their level. No, but you do need to answer them, lest they become wise in their own eyes. And sometimes there's that word fitly spoken, a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, even where you are inspired and prompted by the Holy Spirit to speak truth and let the Holy Spirit speak through you to them if you care about them. Brother, I don't know why it is that nobody cares enough to tell you this, but I care enough to tell you you're full of pride, and this will not end well for you.

And these soothsayers and astrologers and magicians, they're not going to speak the truth. They did not, were unwilling to make known its interpretation because they knew it was not good and Nebuchadnezzar, who has a reputation for having a very short fuse and likes to hack people into pieces and torch their houses to the ground, would not be happy.

So this is self-love and self-protection. You know that if you speak the truth, as hard as it is, they are not going to like you. They will become angry with you and they will also be resentful towards you, initially.

“But the wounds of a friend are faithful and can be trusted.” Yes, they might resent you and hate you and block you on social media, initially, for telling them. The audacity! The nerve! Me? I'm full of pride? What about you?

A pastor, one time after his sermon — he's with the Lord now — I'll never forget this. He shared it at a pastor's conference. It absolutely floored me. And I didn't hear anything he said the rest — I had to go back to the — this is cassette tape time. Not 8-track. Cassette tape. Not a reel-to-reel. Cassette tape.

I had to go back because I was so, just stunned by the way he responded to this sister in the Lord who came up to him after — no, it was a brother in the Lord — came up after his sermon and said, “Pastor, you are so full of pride.”

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Now, if that were me, well, I'm not going to tell you.

[Laughter]

Of course, I would be most gracious. His answer: "Oh, brother, you don't know the half of it." I'm like, dude, perfect! Because I always have people telling me I'm full of pride. And that's the perfect answer. Well, how disarming is that? How humbling is that? That's humility. That's honesty. That's integrity. That's transparency, and that's love. You're so full of pride. Oh, brother, you have no idea how full of pride I am. Let me tell you. And then what are they going to say to that? Oh, well, okay. Well, praise the Lord.

[Laughter]

How do you respond to that? Man, I totally — talk about stealing. I stole that one. So next time, if you want to come up to me and say I'm full of pride, you already know the answer. You don't know the half of it. So they don't want to tell him. I think they knew what the interpretation was, but they chose not to make known to him what the interpretation was. Now, hang on to that.

Enter *verse 8*. **"But at last Daniel..."**

Why was he not there in the first place? At last Daniel? It should be at first Daniel. Daniel, I need you again. I had another dream. Man, what is up with these dreams? I mean, that's a good question, right? And a question for which I do not possess an answer. Why was not Daniel called to begin with, first? Why is he last, last resort? It's come to this. Man, get Daniel. Wow, it's that bad we have to get Daniel?

Now, I have one thought. It's a possibility. I'll just suggest it. I think there's still animosity between Daniel, who oversaw all of these guys when he was promoted at the end of *Chapter 2*. So I think that they have this animosity towards Daniel, and they wanted themselves to be the first.

"And the first will be last, and the last will be first." Just a thought. So **"At last [Last resort] Daniel came before me [Again this is Nebuchadnezzar's testimony] [Now notice this] [In parentheses we're told] (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God)"**

What? Now remember, he's telling us his testimony. He hasn't come to salvation yet. He is like when we share our testimonies. Yeah, man, you know, this guy came and, you know, we were into all of these things, idolatrous things and worshiping false gods and doing these unholy things.

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But God... Remember now, this is his “But God testimony.” **“And I told the dream before him, saying: “Belteshazzar, [Because he's still worshipping his gods and he's still calling Daniel by his other name of his gods] “Belteshazzar, [Verse 9] 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. “These were the visions of my head while on my bed: [That's twice right there] [Did you see that, Kapono, two times] And behold, A tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great.**

[Now Nebuchadnezzar is telling Daniel what his dream was] **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 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.**

“I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, *[(Singing) ♪ Visions in my head, on my bed ♪]* 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 [Notice] its leaves, and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, and the birds from its branches.

Nevertheless [Verse 15] leave the stump and the roots in the earth, bound with the band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him...”

Whoa! Did you see the shift? Nebuchadnezzar is still explaining the dream in detail to Daniel for him to interpret, and he's describing this massive tree. So he huge is this tree. And he goes from describing the tree as an “it” to the tree as a “him.” Let him?

This is the dream. God is the one who gave him this dream about him. And he starts off with this tree being him as an “it” and then ever so perfectly makes it known that the “it” is a “him” Oh, who’s him?

“Let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from that of a man. Let him be given the heart of a beast and let seven times pass over him.”

Now in the original, this word “**times**” means years, seven years. Not seven seasons. Seven years. And this will bear out here in a moment. It is — it has to be seven years.

“This decision, [Verse 17] is by the decree of the watchers.”

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Remember now, the watchers, these angelic hosts, angels, watchers, supernatural angels from heaven are the ones who came down and said, chop it down. And now they're making this decision by decree.

“And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know [Watch this] that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.”

Translated: Nebuchadnezzar, you ain't all that. This kingdom, this, I mean breathtaking kingdom. the Most High rules it. Oh, no, (Chuckle) I think there's been a misunderstanding, a miscommunication. You thought you ruled it? I do. I'm the one who determines who I'm going to give the kingdom to. And I set over the kingdom whomever I will. According to My will I will set over the kingdom to the lowest of men.

“This dream [Verse 18] I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, [Daniel] declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known...”

Well, wait a minute. Doesn't that contradict what you just said about it wasn't that they couldn't, it was that they wouldn't. Now stay with me on this. They did not have the ability to make it known, though they could have, but chose not to. And here's why I know that. Because he goes on to say, **“The wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able.”**

In other words, you have the ability to speak truth into my life. They didn't and they wouldn't. They could have. They should have, but they didn't. But you will because I know you. We have history. You have been faithful in serving, loyal as the most powerful man in the kingdom of Babylon next to me, King Nebuchadnezzar.

I have entrusted you, like Potiphar with Joseph, with everything. I worried about nothing because I knew you would take care of everything. So I know you, Daniel, and I know you'll speak the truth. I know you're able to. These other guys, they're not able. They lack the ability. They're unable to stand in the face of such intense pressure and speak truth to someone like me. But you're not. You're not afraid. And here's why. **“For the Spirit of the Holy God is in you.”**

Now, he's still pre-salvation here. That's why he's talking like that. This is akin to a non-Christian before they are saved and come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ talking about God, but not having yet come to a personal relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ.

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So verse 19, Daniel. **“Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, [And this is interesting] was astonished for a time.”**

Wait, does that mean a year? No. In the original this word translated **“time”** is an hour. Wait a minute. He was astonished for an hour, **“and his thoughts troubled him”?**

Okay, this is one of those times when you want to just put yourself there. You're in the king's palace. You've got a very good, trusted friendship and loyal relationship with the King of this whole kingdom and he just got done putting his — confiding in you, putting his trust in you to interpret his dream, which he has just described in great detail to you. And you know the interpretation and you're speechless.

Wow! For an hour, crickets. You could have heard a pin drop for an hour. I won't do it. I could. I won't. But what if I just took one minute? Not one hour. Just one minute, complete silence. We'd all go crazy. I'd be the first one to go crazy. Because, I mean, it would seem like an eternity. A minute of silence, by the way, that's something, you know, they say, don't try this at home. No, you need to try this at home. Try it. Easier said than done. Take just one minute, silent. Sit silently before the Lord.

You'll start twitching about 15 seconds in because it goes and chafes against everything that this world has become in these busy lives that we live. Everything's so loud and busy and boisterous and clamoring for our attention. One hour: nothing, not a word.

What's Daniel doing? I assure you, he's praying, Oh, God, no! And it's not — it's not like, no, I don't want to tell him. No, this is my friend and this is really going to be hard. And he's going to say as much when he does. But I think he was just grieving and dying a thousand deaths inside, knowing that he was going to have to tell his friend, the King, the truth.

And for an hour, he's just sitting there, and he wouldn't have even said anything or spoken up had Nebuchadnezzar or not said something. He broke the silence. You know how it is when — you know there's silence and — you know who you are. I won't look at you. I'm with you. I'm like you.

You know, the silence is so deafening that you have to break it. So you'll just jump in and blurt out something just so there's not silence. It's so uncomfortable. It's kind of like, is anybody going to say anything? Well, then I'll say it.

Peter was like that. You know those moments recorded in the Gospels, and here's Peter, bless his heart, I mean, he's got to say something. Somebody say something. I'll say it then because you guys

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are just sitting there and it's silent, and I don't — it makes me very uncomfortable. So I'm going to break the silence and blurt out something.

And then Jesus is like, **“Get thee behind Me, Satan.”** And it's in that moment that you realize I probably should've just kept my mouth shut. There's proverbs to that effect, right? A man is thought wise until he opens his mouth and removes all doubt. (Chuckling)

No, you're sitting there, quiet, going, whoa! This guy's just pondering and musing and thinking and hum... And then he says something. You're going, whoa! Yeah. You know, that's saying, “some things are better left unsaid.” You need to apply that to your life. I mean, he doesn't say a word.

And **“So the king spoke, [Breaking the silence] and said, “Belteshazzar...”**

Now notice the affection and the consideration on the part of Belteshazzar — I mean, on the part of Nebuchadnezzar. He's not breaking the silence, saying, hey, Daniel — if you don't mind, I prefer to use Daniel instead of Belteshazzar because “Bel” is Baal, the god. But he's still, you know, this is his testimony, so we got to let him have it. But I'm still going to use Daniel. It's not like, hey, Daniel, what's going on, man? Tell me the interpretation. No, it's **“Do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.”**

Wow! These guys love each other. He's actually more concerned now about Daniel. He's probably never seen Daniel like this before. Whoa. This really shook him. This is not good if Daniel's troubled. And he's concerned for Daniel. You've been sitting there speechless. You haven't moved. You haven't said a word for an hour. You're killing me. Are you okay? Don't let the — I'm sorry. Maybe I shouldn't have told you about this. Obviously, it's greatly disturbed you and troubled you. Don't let it do that to you. I care about you. I love you.

[Daniel] **“Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!”**

Okay, what did he just say? What he just said is, your dream is going to be a dream come true for those who hate you and are your enemies because they are going to rejoice when they see this go down and they see you go down. So it ain't good. I'm pretty sure Nebuchadnezzar is not — can I just say it one time tonight? — stupid. I'm sure he knows by virtue of Daniel's response being so troubled that it's not good. But he trusts Daniel. He cares about Daniel. And he also knows that Daniel will tell him. And that's exactly what's going to happen.

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Here's the interpretation. **"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, whose 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— it is you, O king..."**

Oh, I can't even imagine how difficult it would have been for Daniel to say, like Nathan did to King David, **"You are the man."** Nebuchadnezzar, you are the tree. Boom!

Notice, conspicuously absent from the narrative is any mention of Nebuchadnezzar becoming furious with, irritated by, or angry towards Daniel. Nothing. He trusts him, and he knows Daniel is speaking truth. It's the hard truth. But it's still the truth.

Would to God that there would be Nathans among us, that there would be Daniels among us who are willing to say to someone that is in a very powerful position, it's you. You're the man. (Said regrettably) **"It is you, O king."**

I think that was the tone. And I think it's — you know, these are words on the pages of our Bibles, but I think what gets missed and lost is how what's said is said. I mean, by way of a contrast, just for purposes of illustration, never imagine it would be Daniel saying it like this. (Yelling) It is you, O king!

Ha! I know that's a little dramatic, but you got the point, right? No, it was more like, (Said regrettably) **"It's you, O king."** I

know I talk about this often. But I never imagine the Savior ever having disgust or disdain in His voice when He would speak to the disciples, **"O ye of little faith."** Why did you doubt? The harshest words that ever came out of the Savior's mouth were reserved for the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the leaders, the religious leaders of the day. **"You're of your father the devil."** Wow. Where's the love? **"You're a den of vipers."** **"You're whitewashed tombs."**

I mean, I can go on. There's quite a grocery list of names that He called them that were not kind. How about when He went into the temple? And I know I refer to this. This is actually one of my favorite accounts. I would have — of all the accounts, this is one that would be at the top of the list. If I could have been there, I would have loved to see Jesus as my Savior go into that temple, make a whip — that alone would be worth the price of admission, right there — and start cracking it and taking that table — again, not a Costco folding table — and turning it over.

"My house shall be called a House of prayer." What are you doing? **"You're making it into a den of thieves."** You're ripping these people off, you money changers. Out, out! Wow. I mean — but

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that's the Jesus who, with a much-needed strength, would speak that way. But when it came to the disciples — how about the Samaritan woman? How about the sinners whom Jesus was attracted to? He was repulsed by the proud and attracted to the humble.

Go through the Gospels. You will not find one time where Jesus was ever drawn to somebody that wasn't humble and broken because He was the physician who comes for the sick. If you're well, you don't need a physician. If you're not a sinner, why would you need a savior?

No, I'm here for the lost, the sinner, to save them; the sick, to heal them. So when He would say that to them, much like Daniel would have likely said this to Nebuchadnezzar, it wasn't with disdain or disgust like, (Said with disdain) **“O ye of little faith!”** What's the matter with you?

No, it was, You guys, come on. Why is your faith so little when you're God is so big? Why did you doubt? Just with a compassion and a love and a care in the tone of His voice. And this is Daniel. Oh, it's you, king. I wish it wasn't, but it is.

“It is you, O king, [Verse 22] 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. “And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it...”

“Pride comes before destruction.” You're going to be destroyed, cut down, but you're going to be remaining as a stump. **“...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 [Him] graze with the beasts of the field, till seven years 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 [Verse 25] 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 years shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He chooses. [See, unless and until you know that, and acknowledge that, this is what's going to happen]

And inasmuch [Verse 26] as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, [Remain for you] after you come to know that Heaven rules.”

Now before we get to *verse 27*, I want to point something out here, very important. For seven years, in fact, there are historic documents that show for seven years — I'm going to botch the years. It's

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six-something BC to seven years there's no record of any activity at the kings level in the kingdom of Babylon for seven years, exactly as God's word said it would be and was.

And think about this. Again, this is a logical — God has given us a fearfully and wonderfully made intellect. I think we would do well to use it more. Think this through with me. Your kingdom is going to be there after seven years, when you come back.

No way. Way. Because if God preserves the King — do you know how many people would have been jockeying for that position? Neb's not here. He's a beast. We've got seven years — a hostile takeover, a coup. Nobody takes the kingdom because God said, I'll keep that kingdom for you for when you come back, and you will come back.

So verse 27, now watch this. **“Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; [In a word: repent] [It's not too late] break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.”**

By the way, do you know that the judgment that finally came upon Babylon was because of their merciless oppression of the Jews? They took it too far in their treatment of the Jews. **“Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.”**

In other words, Nebuchadnezzar, O king, I care about you enough to tell you that it's not too late to repent, and perhaps this will pass from you if you will but humble yourself, seek forgiveness, walk righteously, and be merciful. Is that not what the Lord requires of us? That we would **“do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before our God.”**

Well, verse 27, **“All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. [Verse 29] At the end of 12 months [One year. Pretty clear] he [Speaking of Nebuchadnezzar] was walking about the royal palace of Babylon.”**

Wait, a year has gone by since Daniel, just out of love and compassion for King Nebuchadnezzar, interpreted his dream and told him, you can still avoid this from happening. Humble yourself and you will perhaps be spared of this seven years living as an animal in the fields with the dew on you. You're going to be reduced to a beast in the field. Repent.

And so there's kind of a gap here because after he tells him that, there's no response from Nebuchadnezzar, at least one that's recorded. I suppose they parted ways. A year goes by. Has he forgotten? I don't think so. How are you going to forget that? I'm going to be cut down and left as a stump, and I'm going to be as a beast for seven years in the field. Okay. Thank you. Bye.

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A year goes by. I wonder, I believe that he thought about it every day. And then one year goes by. And this is what pride does. This is what pride does. Picture this. Again, put yourself there. If you can just imagine the most majestic kingdom with the most — I mean, I think some estimates were that the circumference of the walls around the city of Babylon were like 60 miles. The width of the walls were such that they had chariot races on top of the walls. They are some thick walls. And we haven't even gotten to the Hanging Gardens yet. Artists have tried to render it and recreate it, and I think they fall woefully short. No way can you possibly — one of the Seven wonders of the World.

So he's out enjoying a walk around the royal palace of which he is King of this massive kingdom.

“The king spoke, [Verse 30] saying, [Oh man!] “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?”

No! You didn't just say that. Oh, yes, he just said that. And while he was saying that, *verse 31*,

“While the word was still in the king's mouth...”

You remember the account in the Exodus, when the mixed multitudes started complaining about the manna every day? No need for a menu. It's manna. What are we eating today? What's on the menu? Manna. Again? Yeah. Manna? There's only so much you can do with manna. Mannagetti. Manna burgers.

No, we want meat to eat. And God was like, really? Because see, the manna was a type of Christ, the bread of life to satiate. And by the way, everything they needed to be in the wilderness for as long as they were, it had all the nutrients that they needed, of course because God knows what we need. He made the body. He knows what the body needs that He made.

So but they became kind of bored and wanted meat like in — man, I remember those buffets in Egypt. The onions, the leeks, the spicy ahi poke.

[Laughter]

I don't remember that. You might. That's called a selective memory, I think. So what does God do? He says, you want meat to eat? Okay, you got it. You want flesh? You want flesh. You don't want the Spirit. You want flesh. You want carne, carnality. You know chili con carne? It's chili with flesh. Carne = carnal. Bon appetite. That's what carne means. You want flesh. You want meat. Okay. I hope you like quail because I'm going to send a lot of quail. And they ate that quail. And we're told that while the meat was still in their teeth, they died.

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While the word was still in his 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, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven years shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He chooses.”

That very hour [Verse 33] 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 [Whoa!] and his nails like birds' claws.”

TMI. By the way, the seven years, this isn't seven seasons: spring, summer, winter, fall. No, this is seven years. Because you don't grow nails like Howard Hughes were at the end of his life, like birds claws in seven seasons or two years.

No, seven years they'll become like birds claws because you didn't have a manicure for seven years. And how about your hair growing like eagle's feathers? Actually, that might be kind of cool. I'd just be happy with a little bit of hair.

[Laughter]

But you're not shaving. So seven years without a haircut or a pedicure or a manicure. I don't want to know about those toes. That's — that's way TMI. Thank you, God, for not including that detail. Now, keep in mind we're still — this is Nebuchadnezzar's testimony. We're almost there.

“And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed [Maybe confessed with my mouth] 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 [Verse 36] my reason return 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. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, [Verse 37] praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice.”

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I think he got saved, don't you? I mean, come on, I'm praising God. You, who is like unto You, O Lord? You are the true and living God, whose works are the truth and ways are just. And look at the ending of his testimony and the chapter and the Bible study with it.

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

Just ask me. Oh, okay, so do you know that after this he's gone from the scene? And I believe the next time he is seen is in heaven. I believe he genuinely came to salvation. But boy, talk about learning the hard way. I mean, but listen, God will do whatever it takes.

I want to add one more thing here, just to ponder and maybe take home with us. I wonder, if this was not an answer to Daniel's prayer for Nebuchadnezzar over all those years. A roommate of mine, at the time when I came to Christ, they kicked me out because I just kept telling them about Jesus, and I was really a buzzkill, you know. They didn't want me there anymore, so I ended up moving out. But I prayed for them.

But this friend, I prayed for like, 15 years for his salvation. Finally, one day, out of the blue, I get a phone call. It's him. I gave my life to Christ. 15 years — and I'm like, you know, being the loving, gracious man that I am, I'm like, 15 years, huh? Really? I mean, better late than never. But really, for 15 years — you thick-headed, stubborn, obstinate, stiff-necked — 15 years? In Jesus' name.

[Laughter]

What's my point? Never give up on praying for people. But no, think about it, right? First of all, we know Daniel was a man of prayer, right? We're going to see that later on in the Book. And oh, by the way, the other reason why we know that time is years is because when we get to *Daniel 9:27* **“For a time and a time and a time—and-a-half,”** three-and-a-half-years.

But Daniel is praying. He's a man of prayer. I truly believe with all my heart that he prayed for Nebuchadnezzar's salvation. And so it's Daniel's fault that he had to go through a 7-year tribulation, which, by the way, is a type, in terms of Bible prophecy.

Salvation at the end of a 7-year period of tribulation. Does that sound like the Jewish nation? Hey, if that's what it takes. That's the purpose of the tribulation is for the salvation of the Jewish nation.

But I believe Daniel prayed for his salvation. And I wonder if God is like with the angels given charge concerning Daniel is like, Daniel, are you sure?

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Because this is going to be a really tough case. This guy, first of all, you're going to have to pray for like 30 years plus for his salvation. And then when he finally does come to salvation, it's going to take quite a bit. This is quite a bit. But if it ends in his salvation, so be it.

Listen, whatever hurts you, heals you. Whatever humbles you, helps you. Let it. Don't fight it. Don't fight it. Don't dismiss that true friend that will speak truth that's hard to hear and that hurts. It's there for you, to heal you and restore you. And as far as pride is concerned, God is all about humbling us.

I think about that Proverb. **"Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up."** You know what that proverb reads like in the JDV? JD, humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, or God will do it for you.

Okay, I don't want God doing it because I know when God does it, it is not fun to be humbled. So don't fight whatever it is or whoever it is that is humbly in love approaching you concerning the pride in you. They love you and they want to help you, and they want to you to avoid something like this. Because when the fall comes, mighty is that fall. When the humbling come and God humbles someone, it is horrible, the destruction that ensues. Okay. Have a nice evening.

Kapono, come on up. And just humble yourselves. Let's stand up. We'll pray. Oh, humility is attractive, though, isn't it, and pride, repulsive?

Father, thank You. This was a big chapter, huge, really. So I suppose we can, at the very least, thank You again for including it in inspired Scripture for us all these generations later. Who knew? You knew that we would need to hear this word fitly spoken concerning humility and the devastating destruction of pride concerning the truth that cuts, that wounds, that hurts, that breaks.

Thank You, Lord, that like with a bone that breaks, it heals stronger at the point of the break than it was originally. And that's what You do in our lives. You break us. You wound us. But it's only to heal us and restore us. Thank You, Lord, for Daniel and his love for this King and prayer for this king's Salvation. We want to be more like that because that's more like You. So thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.