

IX. Daniel in Biblical Perspective  
The Conversion of a Pagan King  
Daniel 4  
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Our text for this study is Daniel 4 and we have a lot of ground to cover with this conversion of this pagan king. First I want to affirm that any conversion is a miracle of the grace of God. Dead sinners are brought to life in Christ. It's a spiritual resurrection. It's a miracle when men and women are dead in their sins and brought to life but there are some conversions that are just so challenging and overwhelming when you consider them. There are three such events in the Bible that overwhelm me. One is the revival and conversions that took place in the city of Nineveh at the conclusion of the book of Jonah. Secondly, the most astounding conversion that I see in the Bible, again that recognizing every conversion is a work of amazing grace, is what I call the Osama Bin Laden of his day and that was the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul was a religious terrorist that killed Christians and he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. He was converted and the persecutor became a preacher. The church destroyer became a church planter. The enemy of Christians became a great evangelist to bring men and women to Christ. The work of grace is so glorious not only in rescuing him but transforming him. The third one is the one we will look at in this study. Here is a pagan king and I don't have time to trace out all of the remnants of the extant literature that affirms this story that have come down through the ages and that affirms this Biblical text that is in front of us. Suffice it to say that God's Word is true and continually stands the verification of time and truth and historical fact.

Yet the question comes to me, "Harry do you really think Nebuchadnezzar is converted in Daniel 4 or was he converted earlier?" There were a couple of occasions earlier where he might have been converted then. If you don't think he was converted previously why would you say this is the conversion? In fact, could this just not be a politician taking advantage of the winds of the day and acknowledged that something supernatural has happened to him but not necessarily his conversion. I hope to draw out for you why I do believe this is a conversion and I fully expect to meet Nebuchadnezzar one day. Whenever I say this I automatically think of last Easter when we had the dramatist George Sarris and he did Daniel for us. He is coming back this year also to do another presentation. But every time I think of him I always think of that presentation he gave about that king Neb-u-ked-nez-zar. I keep wanting to say it that way but that's not how you pronounce it although you can almost feel the venom of snakes upon his tongue when he would say his name but I do believe he was converted. I fully expect to meet Nebuchadnezzar in the glories of eternity. I want to show you why and I think there are some amazing lessons we can draw out of this.

This conversion doesn't take place without some things that have led up to it. We call this the pre-evangelism, pre-conversion work of the Holy Spirit through His people that has taken place. Before I read in Daniel 4 I want to go back to Daniel 2. There was an earlier dream in Daniel 2. We will have one in Daniel 4 as well. In Daniel 2 that dream was interpreted Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar was amazed at the power of God that allowed Daniel to have that interpretation. So this is what was said in Daniel 2:46-48;

*46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. 47 The king answered and said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery." 48 Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.*

So here in this interpretation where Daniel honors the Lord and says, "It's not of me, it's of the Lord" then Daniel is promoted along with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Daniel becomes the chief scholar of all of the intellectuals and scholars, magicians, Chaldeans, astrologers. He becomes the head guy over everyone. And Nebuchadnezzar says some amazing things that are accurate about God but he's not yet converted and we know that because a little bit later when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego will not worship his golden image, what is he ready to do? If Nebuchadnezzar was converted he would have affirmed what they had done but on the contrary he was ready to kill them. He told them, "You can have your God but He's still one of the tribal gods because He's not God of all gods." He had not come to that embracing on a personal basis even though he said something very true in Daniel 2.

That's not the only time he said something like that also. In the last study we saw Jesus Christ Himself in a pre-incarnate ministry comes into the fiery furnace and delivers out Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and Nebuchadnezzar sees that and says, "What God is there that can deliver in this way?" In Daniel 3 we find another movement of the heart of Nebuchadnezzar but not yet to conversion. Daniel 3:28-30 says, *28 Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way." 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.* So he is still not converted. Harry, how do you know that when he just said that God was God of gods again? I know that because he still hasn't been changed.

Who does he think he is? He says, "I'm the god maker. If you don't bow to this God I'll tear you from limb to limb." That's not a converted man would do. Nebuchadnezzar still sees himself in power. Earlier he told Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego if they didn't fall down to his god they would get thrown in a fiery furnace. Now if you don't fall down to this new God then he says he'll tear them from limb to limb. He is still not converted but clearly something is happening to him.

Now we come to a second dream and a second edict in the book of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar has already passed one edict which we just looked at in Daniel 2. He's about to give a second edict and what I'm about to read probably was as it were dictated by Nebuchadnezzar but word smith and edited by his chief of scholars which was Daniel himself. Very likely that is what took place. Let's look at Daniel 4 where it starts off with the edict. We have the edict and the event. Daniel 4:1-3 says, *1 King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! 2 It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the*

*Most High God has done for me. 3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.*

Here is an edict from king Nebuchadnezzar that exalts the One true and living God as God of Gods, King of Kings and His Kingdom is over all Kingdoms. That's the edict. Now how did Nebuchadnezzar get to this point? The edict will now reveal the process through which this pompous pagan became a contrite convert to the One true and living God, to trust in Him alone. Here is how it happens. It is reveal to us starting in Daniel 4:6.

Daniel 4:4-7 says, **4** *I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. 5 I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. 6 So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation.* Some may say if he called all those people in why didn't Daniel come with them? It is because this is a subset of those. These would be the people you would consult on the basis of dreams. Daniel would not only be consulted for that but he would be even above that in his new appointment as the chief scholar of everybody. So he has not yet been brought in. By the way, remember this phrase 'at last'. Notice to that it doesn't say "Lastly Daniel came in..." but it will say "At last Daniel came in..."

Daniel 4:8-18 says, **8** *At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream, saying, 9 “O Belteshazzar (Daniel's official name that he was given), chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. 10 The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. 11 The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. 12 Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it. 13 “I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one (another term in his language of an angel), came down from heaven. 14 He proclaimed aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. 15 But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. 16 Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. 17 The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.’ 18 This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because 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 gods is in you.”*

So here with his past experiences with Daniel - Daniel's relationship to the most High God, Daniel's abilities that he attributes to Divine inspiration, he now calls upon him to interpret this dream. This is Nebuchadnezzar's second dream and the second time Daniel now come to give an interpretation that others could not. Let's look at the interpretation beginning in Daniel 4:19.

Daniel 4:19-22 says, **19** *Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. (In other words Daniel is about to give an interpretation he doesn't want to give and that could endanger his continued existence.) The king answered and said, "Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies!* **20** *The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, **21** whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived— **22** it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth.*

This use of tree and loftiness and everything being sustained from it is not new in Scripture. It is used to describe the work of the Kingdom of God in the book of Ezekiel and the book of Revelation. It is also used to describe the worldly empires that rise up against God, what they claim to be able to provide and to some degree do provide for a short period of time in arrogance against the God who has allowed them to exist. This is used continually in Scripture in such a picture both in a positive sense of the Kingdom of God and also in a negative sense of the kingdoms of men and how in such cases men rise up in arrogance and rebellion against God. But it's not just the kingdom he says. It's not just the empire, the Babylonian empire but it's you O king. This is very similar to the moment when Nathan says to David, "You are the man." It's very similar when John the Baptist says to King Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have her." Now before he gets to the interpretation Daniel recites the dream in clarity with precision so he knows there is no mistake on this interpretation. Before he even gives the interpretation he gives the bottom line which is 'the tree is you' that is about to be chopped down. Let's continue.

Daniel 4:22-27 says, **22** *it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. **23** And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,' **24** this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, **25** that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. **26** And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules. **27** Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your*

*sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.”*

What is he saying here? He says, “King, you’re the man. You’re going to be chopped down. This is a message from heaven delivered by the angels. King, it has not happened yet.” Daniel, of course, is appealing to the One thing that could deliver him. “Before this occurs, by the hand of God, which will last until you’re broken, go ahead and break now. Go ahead and humble yourself. Go ahead and repent. Embrace righteousness and the Lord and abandon the arrogance of your self exaltation. Abandon the arrogance of your sin. Repent now O King.” Now look at what happens after this.

Daniel 4:28 says, **28** *All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.* In other word, he didn’t repent so all that was prophesied came upon him. How did it happen? By the way we are getting toward the end of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign and not too far away from the destruction of Babylon which will come down just like the king after about an 80 to 90 year reign where God had raised it up for a specific purpose to deal with His people. Isn’t it amazing how God raised up this nation that He said He was going to raise up to discipline His people? How long was He going to discipline His people? It was 70 years. How long was this kingdom to last? It was to last about 80 to 100 years and we are approaching the end of its key leader, Nebuchadnezzar, after Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Daniel had been there for some time. Now we come to the end of 12 months.

Daniel 4:29-33 says, **29** *At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon,* **30** *and the king answered and said, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?”* **31** *While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you,* **32** *and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.”* **33** *Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.*

By the way, we have a term for this and you still see this today. It is called boanthropy. It’s when men become animal like in their appearance and in their actions. Usually it shows in their actions first and their appearance afterwards. Now what happens at the end of those seven periods of time? Is the seven periods seven years? It could be. Seven periods of time is there to tell us that there is a specific period of time from the time that God brings His discipline upon Nebuchadnezzar to the time when it is successful and breaks Nebuchadnezzar. The seven is used to indicate that this is of the Lord. It is not of man. The seven is declared for that purpose. It’s not necessary whether it’s seven months or seven years for us to come to a conclusion in this text although in my opinion it is a seven year period but I don’t think that is necessary to assume. Seven periods of time means the Divine Hand of God’s sovereign work is here accomplishing His perfect plan. At the end of 12 months comes the breaking. He is sent out into the field and he looks and acts like an animal. He lives with no shelter under the dew of the

heaven. He feeds upon the grass of the field and has become like an animal in his existence. Let's continue in verse 34.

Daniel 4:34-37 says, **34** *At the end of the days (the seven periods) I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason 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 endures from generation to generation;* **35** *all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay 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 majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me.* **37** *Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.*

This is the testimony of a converted man and let me give you the reasons why which are the takeaways for this study. The takeaways are nine lessons from this text. From this text and the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar there is a lesson I don't want us to miss particularly with our Bridge to Life training coming up and our desiring of being engaged in the process of sharing the Gospel. The first takeaway is conversion is an event that is usually preceded by a process of internal and external calling. If I have every prayed with someone who came to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, I have never in my life prayed with someone who gave their life to Christ who was taken from death unto life and that was the first time that someone had talked to them about Christ. Somebody had planted. Somebody had watered. Somebody has cultivated. Nebuchadnezzar is brought to this event of his conversion through a process.

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were on the one hand bold and on the other hand compassionate. On the one hand they were courageous and on the other hand contrite. These men who lived the Spirit filled grace overwhelming life, God had used for three chapters and we have the accounts of it in Daniel 1-3. Throughout the life span of Nebuchadnezzar and their engagement with him, from the time they got their at around 14 to 15 years old to this time which is probably 25 to 30 years later, they have borne a consistent witness. God has used them and systematically God has blessed what they did and shared externally with what He was doing internally to give Nebuchadnezzar ears to hear and eyes to see.

You and I can't open eyes. We can't open hearts. We can't open minds. Only the Holy Spirit can give eyes to see and ears to hear but what we can do is open our mouth. We can share with others. We will not do as John Stott says which is we will not be guilty of silence concerning our Savior. We will share the Good News, the work of amazing grace. We will also live it. Living God's grace is utterly important because if we don't live it then many times people will dismiss what they say and it's understandable. Now it doesn't mean we have to live a perfect life but a purposed life so that the Gospel is seen in us and heard from us. But no one is going to come to Christ because they are amazed at your life. They will come to Christ because they know the amazing grace of God that changed your life. They will come to Christ by faith and faith comes by hearing.

St. Francis Assisi made a wonderful statement and I know his intentions. He made this statement; Preach the Gospel and whenever necessary use words. May I try to improve upon St. Francis Assisi who I may see the back of his head in heaven. He'll be so much closer to Jesus but if I could so boldly, not because of my insight but because of what I know from the Word of God I would say; Preach the Gospel with your life but it's always necessary to use words because you are saved by faith and faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ. It is Christ, by the Spirit, through you, giving the Good News to others. The internal calling is of the Spirit. The external calling is ours.

Just like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego so we engage in this. I want to strongly, pastorally encourage you whether its evangelism explosion or the Campus Crusade 4-Laws you learned or the one verse evangelism that we're doing with this Bridge to Life, find a way so that your family, friends and the Divine appointments that God gives you that you're able to simply share the Good News with people from your testimony and from the Scripture of this saving grace in Jesus Christ. You may be at that moment reaping a decision for people to become followers of Christ. You may be planting or you may be watering. While God uses us in the external calling, He alone can do the internal calling. In other words, we evangelize, God uses us but here's your liberty because you don't have to convert anybody. In fact, you can't convert anybody.

One man asked me, "How many of your converts do you know of Harry?" I said, "I hope none. My converts aren't going to get to heaven." Only the ones that Jesus has begun a good work in will He complete and be in heaven. I hope to speak of the One who will convert them but I cannot convert them. Only the Lord does conversion but we can do evangelism. Only the Lord does the internal calling but we can do the external calling.

The second takeaway is pride is the mother of all sins and humility is the only true answer to it. When God's grace comes then humility is embraced as the answer to pride. There are numerous texts on this but I want to share just one text from a man who had to learn this of what pride could do in your life. I want to look at 1 Peter 5 but we could go to James, Proverbs and a number of other texts that hold this basic truth before us but here is what Peter says. 1 Peter 5:5, 6 says, *5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."* *6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.* So here is this call. First of all we are warned. God is opposed to pride. Why? It is because the Scripture tells us it is the mother of all sins – self exaltation, self reliance and self absorption gives rise to every other sin.

Recently I was watching a television program where there were people attempting to lose weight. I was watching the trainer and the trainer grabbed the person by their clothing and was shaking them. They said, "Listen, you have to do this for yourself. You have to start living for yourself. Come on, live for yourself." I wanted to jump in the television and say, "That's what got them in that place to begin with." The answer isn't to live for your self. The answer is to die to your self. The answer is not self reliance. It is reliance upon the Lord with resolve. The answer is not self exaltation. It is self denial. That is the answer.

That's why when He gives the dream to Nebuchadnezzar and says, 'O Nebuchadnezzar this is in front of you, therefore say 'no' to arrogance, abandon your

pride, repent, humble yourself and embrace righteousness and the righteous One.” But Nebuchadnezzar decided not to even though Daniel pleaded with him after the interpretation. So what did God do? He opposed the proud and He cut him down like the tree. God is opposed to the proud. He doesn’t just dislike pride, He is opposed to it.

He is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humility is what we desire. It’s interesting how we exalt our self and then pray for humility. God doesn’t give humility as a prayer request. He gives it as an action step. Now can we pray for humility? Absolutely, but the best thing is to pray for the Holy Spirit and the grace of God to give us the ability to do humility. Take the last place not the first. Exalt the Lord and encourage others instead of exalting our selves and putting our selves forward. Rely upon the Lord instead of relying upon our selves. Go ahead and humbles our selves. You can pray for humility but watch out how God answers it. When God answers that prayer it is not usually an enjoyable experience. I think the best thing is to say, “God, grant me grace now to not only pray for humility but to do humility.”

Notice what it says in 1 Peter 5. God is opposed to the proud therefore what? Humble your self. God will exalt you. We exalt our self and then ask God to humble us but God says humble your self and then I’ll exalt you at the right time, in the right way and for the right reason.

The third takeaway is the inevitable mark of pride is self exaltation and the unassailable evidence of humility is self denial. How do we know when pride is coming into our life? It is when there is self exaltation. We don’t go be a friend but we count how many people are befriending us. That’s what we do. We don’t look and see how we are treating others but we count how others are treating us. It’s amazing how we all call ourselves servants of Jesus but watch out if somebody ever treats us like one. We need to watch closely the evidence of pride which unassailably will always be marked out by self exaltation. When humility is there, it is marked out by self denial. It is no longer I who live but Christ that lives in me (Galatians 2:20). Do you have any idea how the preparation of this sermon so convicted me that I almost didn’t show up tonight? This is so overwhelming but again so liberating.

The fourth takeaway is the insidious soil for the birth of pride is many times personal competence and success. C. S. Lewis said, “The most dangerous moment from my Christian life was after I had defended the faith.” I kind of paraphrased it. Someone might think, “You just had the moment to defend the faith and answer the skeptic and you stood for the Lord where His truth prevailed so why do you say that’s the most dangerous moment? That should be a celebration moment.” He said it was the most dangerous moment because whenever I have successfully served the Lord I so easily begin to exalt myself and rely upon myself. It is so easy to do this.

I know we have so great business men and women, some great pastors and some great leaders in this congregation that are very competent, very effective and highly gifted and I pray for your success. I pray for God to prosper what you do but I also know that when I pray for that you and I at any moment that we’re effective, it is that moment that becomes the most dangerous for pride. It is at that moment that we have to stop and say “I am what I am, I’ve done what I’ve done by the grace of God, for the glory of God and my joy is in Him alone.” It is at the moment of our accomplishments that Satan finds the weak spots that we actually begin to believe our own press clippings. We actually will start writing our own press clippings if no one has done it yet. It is at that time that



we are more concerned about what is said concerning us than what the Lord has said for His glory through us.

The fifth takeaway is there is one route from pride to humility and that's repentance. It is the turning from sin and our selves. When I say repentance I don't mean the turning from my sin and my self to do better. It is the turning from sin and my self to Christ. He alone is my life. His Spirit is my strength. His Word is my wisdom. His glory is my joy. Repentance is the one route from pride to humility. If repentance is the route how do you get to repentance?

The sixth takeaway is repentance is either embraced by the conviction of sin and its sinfulness or by the blessed, Divinely inflicted conviction of brokenness. So how do we get to repentance? There are two ways. Repentance is the only way to deal with pride. The Scripture says "Let the mind of Christ dwell within you" (1 Corinthians 2:16, Colossians 3:16) and what is that mind? 'He who did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped but He emptied Himself taking the form of a bond servant and He humbled to be found in appearance as a man' (Philippians 2:6-8). Let me have the mind of Christ which isn't to exalt myself but to humble myself knowing that God has exalted Him at the right time and God will exalt me at the right time but I want God to do the exalting and not me. I want the mind of Christ to humble myself.

What will lead me to that embracing of humility through repentance of my arrogance of pride? It will be the conviction of sin and its sinfulness because all of my sins flow from my pride. All of my sins flow from me trying to make everything all about me even when its in my Christianity, my ministry, and even in my service for the Lord. If the sins are sexual promiscuity, idolatry of appetites, the consuming of wealth, whatever it is it is always rooted in self exaltation so I want to die to myself. I want to repent. I want to embrace humility not the arrogance of pride which mothers all of the sins in my life. To get there I need to be convicted of sin and its sinfulness against the One true and living God or by Divinely inflicted brokenness.

Who wrote 1 Peter 5? This is easy. It's not a trick question. It was the Holy Spirit through Peter. Did Peter ever learn brokenness? Did Peter ever learn humility? Why do you think Peter put that there? He went through life lessons. Whether it was the ship on the sea when Jesus says, "have you caught anything?" They say, "No we haven't caught anything." Jesus says, "Cast your nets on the other side." Peter says, "Lord, we have been fishing all night but we've not caught anything but at Your command we'll do it." Here's an interpretation of Peter's response. "Jesus, we professional fishermen, have been fishing all night. We, professional fishermen, have caught nothing but at Your command, Son of a carpenter, we will throw our nets." You know what Jesus did after that. He filled all the nets and what happened to Peter next? He fell on the ground and said, "O Lord, depart from me for I am an unclean man."

Isaiah sees the Lord high and lifted up. How does Isaiah see himself? He says, "Woe is me." How does Peter see himself after he denies Jesus three times? He sees himself as undone. This matter of humility is not a natural thing with us. It must be cultivated with repentance because we see this sinfulness of sin and sin but if we don't God loves us enough that He will bring the discipline of brokenness.

I was flying at 42,000 feet coming back from the second trip of taking people to Israel and a lady that was in the group turned to me and said, "Pastor I appreciate your ministry, when were you broken?" I asked her later why she asked me that question. I

answered her question but I'm not going to do it here in this study but I'll be glad to tell you that on more than one occasion God has been gracious to do that breaking work because I was too arrogant to repent. When I asked her why she asked me she gave a great insight. She said, "This is what I know. No Christian and no servant of the Lord will He ever use until we're broken before Him." That's what God did with Nebuchadnezzar. We also just sung about it when we sang 'we are the clay and He is the Potter, mold me and make me' and then I can be used of You.

The seventh takeaway is what's the profile of true conversion? The profile of true repentance and conversion to salvation involve several things. The first thing is worship. Nebuchadnezzar is now not talking about tearing people from limb to limb because now he is worshipping the One true and living God. Praise be to God. Then he has the doxology of theology. He now gives praise to God because of who God is and what God does. I hope, wish and pray that we as a people again see the rebirth of Christianity to know the true experiences of death begin and are filled with the true knowledge of who God is from His Word. So many times we want experiences and go proof text them in the Bible instead of knowing who God is and what God has, does and will do for His glory in us. He gives praise to God for who God is. He gives praise to God with personal humility. He confesses his arrogance and pride.

Another element of true conversion is he acknowledges Divine sovereignty. In fact, he said, "My reason returned to me. Up until this happened I was a crazy man. I actually walked around thinking I had done all of this. How stupid and crazy can you be? Then God broke me and made me act like an animal. Whenever you exalt your self and think that you're God then you end up acting like an animal. So now I have acted like an animal. God has broken me and brought me to my senses." When you get rational the doctrine of Divine sovereignty isn't something to discuss in a small group by saying "I wonder if God is sovereign. I wonder if I should believe in election and predestination and all those things in the Bible." I know we have to discuss it – how it works out and everything. I understand that. But the Doctrine of Divine sovereignty isn't up for discussion in a small group except to know it in its fullness. When one is converted they know there is One true God and He does as He pleases from the heavens and upon the earth. That's the evidence that conversion has taken place. It's not a negotiation between God's sovereignty and my sovereignty. It is a recognition that every dignity of every choice I make is based upon the fact that the One true and living God is sovereign.

Another evidence is the absolute dependency upon God's grace. It's not that God helps those who help themselves. On the contrary I haven't done these things and now God comes along and blesses them. Everything I've done has been through the blessed goodness and strength of the Lord in my life. Finally there is gratefulness and devotion that God is now my life and that He is the reason for my life. That's why I believe Nebuchadnezzar was converted.

The eighth takeaway is the life from God's grace for God's glory alone makes sense. The life of self exaltation, self reliance or the life of sin doesn't make sense. I cannot tell you the number of times and I'm sure I speak for the other pastors, when I am sitting with someone in which the home has been broken, the marriage had been broken, the life has been broken and everything has been broken and one of those who have been a victim of that sinful choice, particularly I see it with ladies who say "Why did my husband do this?" The one thing I always tell them is this; sin never makes sense. Don't

look for sense. Sin is non-sense. It is God's grace, the glory of God and the sovereignty of God alone that makes sense. The life of self reliance and self exaltation no matter how appealing is always non-sense.

The ninth takeaway is God alone can save but God delights in using us to save others. I don't know how this happens in heaven but I would guess that not only will I meet King Nebuchadnezzar there but my guess is that when I get there, there may be a discussion going on between Neb, Dan, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. I can't help but think while all the praise and glory will be going to the One true and living God, in that discussion it's going to be 'thank you for your courage, thank you for your faithfulness, thank you for your life and for speaking the Word of life to me.' God alone saves people but God delights in using us to bring others to Himself even pompous pagan preachers get converted much less kings. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could spend together. Thank You that You show us our pride. Your gracious to bring us to repentance and even loving to discipline us lest we walk for and in ourselves. Father, thank You for the lessons from this text. Father, thank You for the truth of converting kings, servants and wise men. Thank You for converting young and old, rich and poor. Thank You Father, that the grace of the Lord Jesus is not only amazing but always sufficient and ultimately irresistible when the hand of a sovereign God determines to bring a sinner home. Thank You for saving us, in Jesus' Name, Amen.