

Kingdom Down #4 - Jesus is King

- Alright, we're in the Book of Daniel 4. If you've got a Bible, go there. We're gonna cover a lot of verses today. I get paid by the verse, this is gonna take a while. And I would just say, if you wanna laugh or clap or cheer during the sermon, or say, amen, feel free to, 'cause at the 9:00 a.m., I love those people, but I feel like I pastored a library. So, let's increase the energy level this service, okay? All right, all right, all right, all right, all right. All right, cool, cool, cool. Well, let me get you caught up if your new, Book of Daniel, great Daniel, the storyline is about 2,600 years ago, about 600 years before Jesus Christ walked on planet Earth. And what we are learning about is this nation called Babylon, that is empowered by the demonic spirit of Babylon that continues its work in all day, all the way up until the end of history when Jesus returns to crush it. And the leader of that nation, the most powerful mega empire on earth is a king who's worshiped as a god, his name is Nebuchadnezzar. And his empire is vast. I'll show it to you real briefly. So, everything that's orange was his real estate portfolio. He didn't just have a nation, he ruled it with an iron fist as a god. In our day, the way it works is this; there's about 200 sovereign nation states in the world today. Each has a fixed boundary. So, we've got a boundary to Mexico, we got a boundary to Canada. In that day, it was very simple; if your army could defeat their army, you would destroy their king, you would plunder all of their wealth, you would enslave their citizens and you would expand your empire. This was Nebuchadnezzar's specialty. He was exceedingly good at war and conquest. By the time we find him in Daniel 4, he literally doesn't just rule, but he personally owns. Think of this. Some of you have a real estate portfolio. This is quite a portfolio. What we would now call Turkey, Syria, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, all the way over to the border of Iran, he owned all of it, ruled over it from Iraq. Ancient Babylon is modern day Iraq. So, he is a man who is without fear, he has absolute power, and he is ruling and reigning, and his life is at the peak of what any of us could even envision for luxury and power and comfort and security. So, we learned in chapter one, he sends his army rather to march the 700 miles to the nation of Israel, to conquer God's people and plunder God's temple. Chapter two, we looked at the fact that then he had this dream from God, and he couldn't understand it, so Daniel interpret it for him. Daniel is one of the young men who is taken as a captive of war. Kidnapped in his teen years, he is forced to go to the University of Babylon, he is forced to become a eunuch, he is forced to work for King Nebuchadnezzar. But because the dream comes from God, in chapter two, the Spirit of God resides in Daniel, so he interprets it. Chapter three, Nebuchadnezzar builds a 90 foot high golden statue of himself, tells everyone to bow down while the band plays, three dudes don't, those are Daniel's friends, so they throw those Jews into a fiery furnace. He is the Adolf Hitler of the ancient world. He is blitzkrieging the surrounding nations, he wants to be worshiped as a god, and if you don't obey him, he throws you in a fire. It's history repeating itself as the spirit of Babylon works throughout the course of human history. Where we pick it up in chapter four, Daniel is no longer a teenager as he was in chapter one. He's about my age, so he's mature. He's very mature. He's in the range of 45 to 50, okay? Just pray for me, I can't see. If you look at Grace and I, I say that women age like wine and men age like milk. And so, that's kind of what we're dealing with. So, he's about my age, he's 45 to 50 years of age, he's been in Babylon now for around 30 plus years. And what happens in chapter

four, I'll set it up for you, Nebuchadnezzar, the great mighty king, goes cray cray, loses his mind. I mean, we're talking tinfoil hat underwear outside your pants, losing it, right? Like, he's not doing good. He disappears for seven years, and then he returns, and this is his State of the Union address, this is his Twitter account, telling all of Babylon what had happened for those seven lost years. And the last thing I'll say before we jump in, the spirit of Babylon is not just something that happened in the ancient world, it happens in every age. And what I want you to see is that, the same demonic forces at work in his day, remain at work in our day. I'll give you one very obvious historical example. As I denoted, he rolled over what is modern day Iraq, he called it Babylon. I don't know if you remember this. You remember a guy named Saddam Hussein who little while ago? He ruled from where? Iraq. Guess what he said. He said he was the reincarnation of Nebuchadnezzar. He wasn't the reincarnation, but he was empowered by the same demon. We don't believe in reincarnation, that people come back, but we believe in demons. And that is that, one person may have a demon, and then later on, another person has that demon. They're not reincarnated, but they're carrying forth that demonic spirit. So, Saddam Hussein named itself the reincarnated Nebuchadnezzar. He tried to rebuild Nebuchadnezzar's empire. It's why he amassed an army. As he sought to rebuild cities, he would put his name as Nebuchadnezzar did on all of the bricks. He would dress up as Nebuchadnezzar for state-sponsored military parades. And if you were a good soldier, he would give you a big metal. On one side, it had the face of Nebuchadnezzar, on the other side, it had his face as the new Nebuchadnezzar, all from Babylon. The Bible doesn't just tell us what happened, but what always happens. We'll pick up the story in chapter four, and we'll learn the difference between a biography and a testimony. King Nebuchadnezzar to all people. So this is a royal decree, this is him having his press conference, this is him stepping behind the podium, and reading his prepared statement. "King Nebuchadnezzar, to all peoples, "nations and languages, that dwell in the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you! "It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders "that the Most High God has done for me. "How great are His signs, how mighty His wonders! "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, "and His dominion endures from generation to generation." Three mega themes that appear here, number one, God's kingdom versus human empires. He talks about the kingdom of God over and over and over, especially in chapter four, in comparison to his empire. And the point is this, that we're all building something, we are. You got a family, you got a business, you got a ministry, you've got finances, whatever the case, may be, we're all building something, and it is either part of God's kingdom or not. There's nothing wrong with building something as long as it's part of God's kingdom, meaning it is done to God's glory, it's done according to God's design. The problem is, Nebuchadnezzar has built the most impressive, powerful empire on the earth, but it's not part of God's kingdom. And as a result, it's in conflict with God's kingdom. What Nebuchadnezzar is literally trying to build is the same thing we're all trying to build; heaven on earth. He wants heaven on earth. He wants heaven on earth, but his empire is not part of God's kingdom. The point is this, build your business as part of God's kingdom, build your family as part of God's kingdom, build our church as part of God's kingdom. Whatever you have, whatever you do, don't build your own little empire, instead, invest in the kingdom of God. That's part of the underlying theme and conflict here. Number two, it's the most high God versus lesser rulers. And you're gonna hear this phrase, Most High God, over and over and over. So, in their nation, they have this concept of

lots of gods and goddesses and religions and spiritualities, but over at all was Nebuchadnezzar, and he was the lord, he was the king. Well, then Daniel shows up and says, "Actually, there's a higher King, a better King, "whose name is Jesus." Chapter seven, he talks about Jesus coming back to establish the kingdom that never ends. And so, the Most High God, the King of kings here, is ultimately pointing to the Lord Jesus who rules over all lesser human and divine rulers. So it's about a kingdom versus empires, the Most High God, about other rulers. And ultimately, here, you're dealing with the difference between a testimony and a biography. Up until this point in the story, every time God uses Daniel for something wonderful, he gives credit to God. He says, "Let me interpret that dream. "Well, actually, I can't do it, but my God can. "Let me help you, "actually, I can't help you, but my God can." He always gives the credit or the glory to God. That's a testimony. Nebuchadnezzar, all he's got is biography. You're goNNA hear this, "I, I, I, my, my, my." That's what he is talking about. The difference between a testimony and a biography is this; telling the story of your life, and then determining who gets the credit. Okay? If it's you getting the credit, that's a biography, that's all that our world knows, right? There's a whole genre of literature called biography. "This is what I did, this is what I overcame, "this is how I conquered, how awesome am I, "you can be like me. "Buy my T shirt, follow me on social media, "we can both be awesome." That's a biography. A testimony is, "This is what God did for me, "this is what God did in me, "this is what God did through me, "this is what God did in spite of me." Okay? And so here, it's the collision between a biography and a testimony. Up until this point, Nebuchadnezzar has a biography, Daniel and his friends have a testimony. The point is this; when you look at your life and you tell your story, you've got to decide who gets the credit for the good things. If you give credit to God, then that will be a testimony. And what a testimony is, it's a witness to other people. 'Cause some people don't know God, or they know God but they're discouraged and they're losing hope. And when you tell your testimony of God's faithfulness, it encourages them to trust in your God. That's why Daniel is going to live for a testimony. Now, that being said, we're gonna read a lot of verses, we're gonna go through Daniel in 12 weeks, there's 12 chapters, one chapter a week, this is how the narrative breaks out. This is a lot of verses, I'll read fast, and you're gonna learn about the difference between your kingdom and God's kingdom. He says, "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease." That is an understatement, at ease. When you rule empires and you live in a city surrounded by high walls with the mode and soldiers, and you've got a harem, and you have so much extra gold, you made a 90 foot you of gold. Like if you live in Paradise Valley, you live in a dump. He used your house as his garbage can. He is living large, he is he is rolling, he has rims on his camel. I mean, he is living. He is living large, okay? I was at ease, right? In my house. His house is a what? It's a palace. He's like, yeah, I wanna come to my house? It's a palace. You own nations. You're doing so good and prospering. This guy doesn't pay taxes, right? This guy owns everyone and everything. But here's the point, I saw dream. No one could get to Nebuchadnezzar, but God can get to Nebuchadnezzar, and that's the point. You can't hide from God, you can't run from God, you can't avoid God. Nobody can get to Nebuchadnezzar, but God can, and it's not a problem for God. Some people will say, "How could God judge people "that have never heard about Him?" My point is, we don't know who's heard about Him. He uses angels, dreams, visions. He's real creative and supernatural, our God, and He keeps revealing Himself to Nebuchadnezzar. "I saw a dream that made me afraid." You ever had those?

- [Congregation] Yes.

- You ever had those? You have a dream, you're asleep, you see something, you're like, "I don't know if that's true or not, "but I'm pretty freaked out." That's his night. "As I lay in bed, the fantasies "and the visions of my head alarmed me. "So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon," their descendants are the guys who come to Jesus when He is little, we celebrate this every Christmas, and they bring the gold back to its rightful King, "The wise men of Babylon should be brought before me." And I don't know why they're called wise men. They never do anything. They just stay there. Like, we're very wise. Can you help? No. Do you have any answers? No. Were very wise. They're college professors. Okay, that's what they are. All right. You're welcome, it's gonna get worse. Okay? This is the warm up, kids. Hey, I don't write the mail, I just deliver it. "The wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, "that they might make known to me "the interpretation of the dream. "Then the magicians, the enchanters, "the Chaldeans, the astrologers," these are four different kinds of demonic leaders. They're all Rolling in from Sedona. They all come down here to Babylon. He says crazy things. Yeah, that's why we come. "And I told them the dream, "but they could not make it known to me "or its interpretation." All right? At last, Daniel. Here comes, and nobody knows what's going on. Go get me Daniel. "In before me, he who was named Belteshazzar," that is Bel or Bel, it's a demonic false god that means my God protects me. His birth given name is Daniel, God is my judge. The demonic name they seek to give him is Bel will protect you. This is a competition between the God who judges and the demonic god who lyingly says he is a protector. "After the name of my god, "and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods." This is a key to understand Daniel. Three times in this chapter, the unbelieving Nebuchadnezzar looks at Daniel and says, "The Spirit of God is in that guy. "He has the Holy Spirit. "He is Spirit filled, he's Spirit filled." To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be able to live by God's presence and power in a place that is opposed to you like Babylon. Make no mistake, we all live in Babylon, and we need the Spirit of God if we're gonna make it. That's the story of Daniel. "The spirit of the holy gods, "and I told him the dream saying, "'O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians," he's the lead Bible teacher in Babylon, "'Because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, "'that no mystery is too difficult for you, "'tell me the visions of my dream that I saw, "'and their interpretation. "'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. "'The tree grew, became strong, its top reached to heaven, "'and it was visible to the end of the whole earth.'" Huge tree. "'Its leaves were beautiful, it's fruit abundant, "'and then it was food for all. "'The beasts of the field found shade under it, "'the birds of heaven lived in its branches, "'and all flesh was fed from it. "'I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, "'and behold," what? "A watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven.'" Who's that? Who's the male man? What's the male man with wings doing? Well, you know, this is different. It's a divine being. See, God sometimes sends a message, and when He does, He sends a messenger from the unseen realm into the scene realm. I'll explain all of this to you shortly. "He then 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 let the birds from its branches. "'But leave the stump of its root in the earth, "'cut it down to the stump "'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. "Let his mind be changed from a man's, "and let a beast mind be given to him; "and let seven periods," most likely seven years of time, "Pass over him. "The sentence is by the decree of the watchers." Sometimes God delegates decisions to His human or divine staff in the seen and unseen realms respectively. "The sentences by the decree of the watchers, "the decision by the word of the holy ones," divine beings, "to the end that the living may know that," who? "The Most High rules the kingdom of men," and hear me in this, "And gives it to whom he will." What that means is, God is in charge of who is in charge. You're gonna hear this stated again in Daniel's interpretation of the dream. What that means is, whoever is in charge is ultimately put there by God. So, here's what you needed to; be politically active, vote your conscience, work for religious liberty, issues of life, that's all well and good, but whoever wins, know that that was God's choice. That He either caused it or He permitted it. Now, we don't believe this, right? 'Cause we believe CNN or Fox, not the Bible. And the result is, we think if our guy won, God won, if our guy lost, our God lost. Our God always gets who He wants. Now, some would look at Nebuchadnezzar and say, "Surely God would not want that guy." He picked him. He picked him as judgment on their disobedience. Okay? So they didn't want the good King, Jesus, so they get the bad king. And hopefully that brings them to the point where they want the good King back. Okay, that's what's going on here. Look, here's what I'm telling you. We're gonna have an election this year, don't freak out.

- [Congregate] Amen.

- Okay? One of you believes that, the rest of you should join him. The rest of you should join him, okay? "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," they're not that wise, "But you are able, for the spirit "of the holy gods is in you." What he's saying is, I got a revelation from God, and only a child of God can interpret the revelation from God. Don't be surprised when people you know and love may even get a little Bible and they're like, "I can't make heads or tails of it." This is a supernatural Book, and it takes the Spirit of God to understand the revelation or the Word of God. And so, he's like, "Okay, God spoke, none of us know God, "you know God, could you come out." Right? This is like your non-Christian friend has a dream, and they're like, "Tell me what happened." They're reading the Bible, and I can't make heads or tails of it, please explain. Three things I want you to see here. Number one, God rules over human rulers. It's what he says. God sets up kingdoms and takes them down, God sets up kings and takes them down. Okay? So God rules over human rulers. This gives us comfort, that ultimately God is in control of who's in control, and God rules over who rules. Number two, God not only rules over physical rulers in the scene realm, He rules over spiritual rulers in the unseen realm. This is one of the great mega themes of Daniel, and that is, in addition to the seen world that we see, there is an unseen world that God sees, God rules both realms, therefore one reality, and occasionally, He'll send a divine being from the unseen realm, into a human being in the seen realm. That's exactly what we've just witnessed here in Daniel 4. All of this is to show that God is at work doing a lot of things that we don't see,

and ruling over and staffing army that we only see on occasion, but they are absolutely at work in our world; politically, nationally, historically. And this is God's divine counsel. Just as Nebuchadnezzar was a king, God is the King. Just as Nebuchadnezzar had a divine throne room, God has a Divine Throne Room. Just as never condenser sat on the throne, we see the Lord Jesus throughout the Bible ruling and reigning from the unseen realm, and He is seated upon a throne. And just as Nebuchadnezzar gives orders to his human staff, so God gives orders to His divine staff. Meaning, beings that are created, but they're nonphysical, they are spirit beings. And these are mentioned here in chapter four, a watcher and a holy one or the holy ones. These are God's divine servants in the unseen realm. An angel means a messenger of God. They are probably a lower level divine being, there are other classifications, there's a bit of mystery here, but just to give you by way of introduction, there is this constant appearance of this angelic and other divine being army staff that is serving God throughout the Book of Daniel. So, here in chapter four, we meet a watcher, a holy one and the holy ones, an angel is mentioned in chapter three, chapter six, it's talking about in chapter seven of Daniel, 1,000 times 1000, and 10,000 time 10,000 angels. At chapter eight, it speaks of a host of heaven. In chapter eight, it also speaks of the prince of the host. So not only are there angels, they're architected and organized like military with those who are ruling and reigning in authority. The Angel Gabriel appears in chapter eight, chapter nine. Also shows up later to Jesus' mother Mary. We're told of the Prince of Persia, the angel Michael. Only two angels in the Bible, Michael and Gabriel are named. They both appear in Daniel. But in chapter 10, we meet the Prince of Persia. Michael and the chief princes, they appear as well in chapter 12. In chapter 12, we see a being that is divine. that appears like a man clothed in linen, and also in chapter eight, we meet another divine being called the Lord, meaning it rules and rains on behalf of God under His sovereign authority. All of that is to say that there's a lot more going on in this world than you and I think, know or see. And we need to trust that God is at work behind the scenes doing what we're not seeing. And just as they are serving Him faithfully, we should be serving Him faithfully. These are His servants in the unseen realm, you are His servants in the seen realm, and we are to work together. In addition, it means that we have, here at the Trinity Church, in addition to human leadership, there is divine leadership. Revelation 2,3 is written to seven churches, and each one is said to have an angel. Right? We have physical protection and spiritual provision from the heavenly hosts that comes from God. I don't know who the angel is that oversees the Trinity Church, but they serve the Lord just as we serve the Lord. And that is God's protection and provision for His people. This is all supernatural and we believe in all of it. Just so you know, I believe dead people get rise, I believe Jesus walked on water, I believe angels are real, I believe God speaks through dreams, I believe in all of it. Our God is a supernatural God. And that's what we're learning in Daniel. That's what we're learning in Daniel. God rules over human rulers, God rules over divine rulers, and God rules over some individuals. What's really curious here, Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel; Nebuchadnezzar is free, Daniel is a slave. Nebuchadnezzar is probably the richest and most powerful man on the earth, Daniel owns nothing and has no power. Nebuchadnezzar's got a harem, Daniel's a single guy, right? They're different. Yet, who's the one that holds the power?

- [Congregate] Daniel.

- Daniel. Because he has the one thing that Nebuchadnezzar doesn't have, the Spirit of God. The most powerful possible thing you have in your life is not a thing, it's a person, and his name is the Holy Spirit. Okay? And so, what Nebuchadnezzar has, he has gold, he has soldiers, he has land, he has power, he has demons, and what he really needs is God. It just goes to show everybody needs God. Sometimes we think that poor people need God, so do rich people. Sometimes they go, powerless people need God, so do powerful people. Well, people who have failed really need God, so do people who have succeeded. Sometimes success is harder to manage than failure. That's the story of Nebuchadnezzar. You can win at life and be miserable unless you have a relationship with God. That's Nebuchadnezzar. This is why sometimes, the most successful people are the most suicidal people. That they have built their kingdom, their heaven on earth, and it doesn't work for them, and their sleep is interrupted and they're afraid. And there are mysteries that they do not understand, and they need the Spirit of God. You need to know that the same Spirit that empowered Daniel to live in Babylon, is the same Spirit that empowered Jesus to live under the Roman Empire, and it's the same spirit that empowers the children of God to live in this demonic, cursed and fallen world. The Greater is He who is in you than he who is in this world. Greater is He who is in you than he was in this world. And so, Daniel submits and surrenders to the Spirit of God, and He is spoken of three times. Okay? Now, what's gonna happen next is very significant. And what God is saying is, you can build a massive empire, but if it's not part of my kingdom, it's just going to get chopped down. We should all take that to heart. Whatever you're building; I wanna build our family, build our church, build ministry, build Bible teaching, there's things I wanna build, I am building by God's grace, and I hope for God's glory. I want those all to be part of God's kingdom. And if they're not, they get chopped down. They get chopped down. So what's gonna happen now, he has this dream, he brings in Daniel, he needs the Spirit of God, and then Daniel is going to speak to him. Let's see how the believer speaks to the unbeliever. We read of Defiance versus Repentance. "Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "was dismayed for a while." He gets the interpretation from God and it bothers him, it troubles him, it concerns him. Why? Because he loves Nebuchadnezzar. He has faithfully served for 30 or more years, one of the most wicked men in the history of the world. He is mentioned more than any other ruler in the Bible. If memory serves me correct, some 90 times, Nebuchadnezzar is spoken of, and it's negative. And when Daniel gets a word from God about the doom and demise of his enemy, he's heartbroken because he loves his enemies. Jesus taught us to love our enemies. Daniel here is loving his enemy. Some of you say, "I can't love them." You're gonna need a miracle, his name is the Holy Spirit. Okay? God loved us when we were enemies, and He empowers us to give His love to our enemies. That's exactly what Daniel is demonstrating and doing. "And his thoughts alarmed him. "The King answered and said, "'Belteshazzar, let not the dream "'or the interpretation alarm you.'" These men are probably face to face. And he could see it on Daniel's face, "He's really worried for me, he loves me. "Daniel, please tell me the dream, "don't be worried or alarmed. "I trust you, tell me what God said." "Belteshazzar answered and said, "'My Lord,'" he's respectful, "'May the dream be for those who hate you "'and its interpretation for your enemies. "'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, "'whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, "'and in

which was food for all, "under which the beasts of the field found shade, "and in whose branches the birds of the heaven lived, "it is you, "O king, who have grown and become strong. "Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven." Nebuchadnezzar, you've won. You've won every war, you've won every dollar, you've won. "And your dominion extends to the end of the earth." "And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one," a divine being, a messenger from God, "Coming down from heaven and saying, "Chop down the tree and destroy it, "but leave the stump of its root 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, "let his portion be with a beast of the field, "till seven periods of time," perhaps seven years pass, "Over him." "This is the interpretation, O king, "it is a decree," from who? The Most High. Here's what Nebuchadnezzar does, he gives decrees, and now he gets a decree. God is showing him, you are not the Most High. You are the most high on the earth, I am the Most High overall on the earth. And when God gives an order, here's the point, it is going to happen. Nobody ever won an argument with God. Nobody ever picked a fight with God and walked away with a belt. Nobody has ever does that. And what he's saying is, okay, Nebuchadnezzar, God has been very good to you, you've been very bad to Him and to other people, and now you need to make a decision, will you submit to the decree of the Most High God, or will you stand in defiance as if you were the Most High God? This is a battle between the real God and the fake counterfeit god. "O king: It is the decree of the Most High "which is come upon my lord the king, "that you shall be driven from among men, "and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field." You're gonna lose your mind. "You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, "and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven.' Where's he gonna sleep? Dude owns a palace with the chef, and he's gonna move out in the yard and eat the grass. Just so you know, that's a demotion. Amen, that's a demotion. "And seven periods of time shall pass over you "till you know that the Most High," not you, "Rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom He will. "And as it was commanded "to leave the stump of the roots in the tree, "your kingdom shall be confirmed for you "from the time that you know that Heaven rules. "Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you." Here's what the God of heaven, the Most High God, the Lord Jesus Christ demands, break off your sins, repent. Repentance is a change of mind, I was wrong, it's a change of heart. I need to change. It's a change of life. Things need to change. What he's saying is, you're a sinner, you need a Savior. He's going full on Billy Graham on him. You're a sinner, you need to savior, time is short, make your decision now. Do you think Nebuchadnezzar liked this message? No. No, he does not like it. Sometimes we have to, in love, say things that people don't like, because it is God's decree to them. "Let my counsel be acceptable. "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." A couple of things here. I'll give you four principles. Number one is the fake Jesus principle. There was a movement some years ago, remember that? WWJD, right? What Would Jesus Do bracelets, merge, whole thing. It's not bad, but it has one flaw. If all you ever do is what Jesus did, you will not do the thing for which Jesus died. Sin to be repented of. Jesus never repented. Jesus never said, "It was my fault, I'm sorry, " I was wrong, I need to be forgiven," because Jesus was perfect and God without sin. You and I, we all need Jesus, and we need forgiveness of sin. Anytime you say, I don't apologize, I don't say sorry, I don't admit wrong, you're being a fake Jesus. You're saying, there's nothing in me that needs to change. That don't raise your hand

answering this question if your dad is here, but how many of you grew up in a home where your dad was a Nebuchadnezzar? He never said he was wrong, never said he was sorry, and never owned his failures. Never. That's the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar. It's all in us. If you're married, you've encountered the spirit. Right? And if you've gotten in an argument with your spouse, and they're just not gonna apologize, they're not gonna own it, just pray over them, O Nebuchadnezzar. Right? I'm not saying it'll work, I just wanna see what happens. But we all have this little Nebuchadnezzar that lives in us, right? I'm not saying sorry, I'm not saying I'm wrong, I'm not gonna change, this is who I am, this is my personality. Well, repeat repent of your personality, right? This is the fake Jesus principle. Number two, the God warns then waits principle. Has God been warning Nebuchadnezzar? Yes, for 30 years. Let me just say, that's patient. And God comes through a dream, and then Daniel, and says, "Okay, the clock is ticking, you got 12 more months." You don't give your enemies that kind of time. How many of you knowing the future, would be like, let's just taser him and shut this guy down, right? He's not gonna change, he's bad. All right, good, lock him up. Right? God warns then waits. And what happens is people think that they're getting away with something. They're not, God is being patient. Some of you, you're like, "Well, I didn't accept Jesus, "I didn't repent of my sin, I don't care about God, "I don't really do what God wants me to do "or be who God's called me to be. "Nothing's happened yet." Yet. God has warned you and He's waiting patiently, but ultimately, like Nebuchadnezzar, there is a day of judgment and consequences. Number three, principle number three, forgive first. The forgive first principle is, before you connect, and then you correct. Let me say it this way. Before you correct, you need to connect. What Daniel is gonna do is he is connected with Nebuchadnezzar. He has loved him and now he's going to correct him. And he's going to do so, I believe, because he's already forgiven him. Because, when Nebuchadnezzar looks at Daniel's face, what he sees is concern. If Daniel was bitter and unforgiving, do you think his face would be sorrowful and concerned? Like oh, I got an interpretation. You're gonna go cray cray, you're gonna live in the yard and I'm gonna take over. Amen, thank you, Lord. Where's that band? Let's bring that band back. How many of you, if you knew your enemy was falling, you would be worshipping out of bitterness, you would be celebrating, you would be cheerful? Oh, I knew they were gonna get it. Oh, I'm so glad, finally! There's none of that in Daniel. He's already forgiven. How do I know? He says, "God says, 'Stop oppressing people "'and mistreating and abusing them.'" That would include who? Daniel. Didn't take it personal or make it personal. Daniel didn't say, "Stop oppressing people like me." 'Cause here's Daniel's life; kidnapped, castrated, vegetarian in Iraq. Let me just say, that's a lot of forgiving. Amen. How many of you men, your second emotion is like, that's just the vegetarian thing, I'm not sure I could forgive. Right? He's got a lot of forgiving to do. And he faithfully serves for his whole life. And when it comes to bringing a hard word, he does it with a tender heart, because he's already forgiven Nebuchadnezzar. Principle number four, and this is incredibly important. It's easier for people to hear you if you love them. Okay? Sometimes I hear this all the time, person goes, I told my kid, the love didn't precede, so the listening didn't follow. If you know somebody loves you, when they say something hard, you're more likely to receive it. Daniel has loved and serve faithfully for a long time. And so, he is going to communicate something that is difficult, but it's preceded by love. Sometimes bad news or truth is like a withdrawal, which means We need to make a lot of deposits. Love is how we make deposits,

and then a hard word, he's making a withdraw. But he's already built up enough in that relationship account, that Nebuchadnezzar trust that what he is saying is true and his heart is good. Well, now Nebuchadnezzar has got a decision to make. Is he going to experience humiliation? Or will he choose the path of humility? "All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. "At the end of 12 months," God was patient for a year, He's been patient with all of us, "He was walking on the roof of his royal palace in Babylon." So, most powerful nation, most powerful city, he had one of the seven wonders of the world constructed, it was the hanging gardens. May have heard of this. It's because his wife grew up in a lush rich area, and he moved her to a barren desert, it was a dry heat, but she missed the green array, she missed the green. Some of you are like, this is my thing, I missed the greenery. So she went to her husband, she's like, "I know we need to live in the desert, "but I really missed the greenery." So he built the hanging gardens, one of the seven wonders of the world, just to make his wife happy. Moral of the story is, if your girl wants something, give it to her. That's the moral of the story. All right? So, what happens is he's up on the roof of his palace, maybe amidst the hanging gardens. "And the king answered and said, "Is not this Babylon "which "I "have built?" I'm awesome. I have done such a good job. We would say that he has high self esteem. Right? Just so you know, that's demonic. Somebody's like, "Well, we studied in school." There's a lot of demonic things you study in school. Okay? "I have built by my mighty power." I'm awesome. Look at what I've done, I'm incredible. "As role residents and for the glory of my majesty." I did it. I built heaven on earth. Crushed it, winning. What's God gonna do? "While the words were still in the king's mouth," right? He's like, I'm off before he even got the sum out. God is like, I had enough of that, had enough of that. "A voice spoke from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken, "the kingdom has departed from you." That's my kingdom son, not yours. "You shall be driven from among men. "Your dwelling shall be with a beast 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." This dude's got to do this for seven years. You know what that means? He's a slow learner. That's what that means. He's like, I got to eat the yard for seven years? Yeah, until you learn. Some of you're like, I'm that stubborn. Take me seven years to learn the lesson. "That the Most High rules the kingdom of men "and gives it to whom he will." "Immediately, the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. "He was driven from among men, "ate grass like an ox, "his body was wet with the dew of heaven," don't suppose lives outside, "Till his hair grow as long as eagle feathers." Was it in the Tom Hanks movie where he's stranded on an island, his only friends of volleyball, and he needs a sport day? He goes like I got use a sport day, Shazam. That's exactly what's going on here. "And his nails were "like bird claws." He's not doing well. He's not doing well. He has a hard heart, but it's not God's fault. Just like the Pharaoh in Exodus, his heart is hard, his heart is very hard, but it's not God's fault, it's his fault. God said, I'm gonna send Daniel and I'll send a dream and I'll rescue some guys from a fire, and I'll give you a another dream, and I'll give you a year warning. And if you're still declaring war, you get what you get. Okay? You can't blame this on God. Okay? Sometimes we'll look, we'll say like, why do bad things happen to good people? There aren't a good people. The only good person was Jesus, and all he got was bad things.

- [Congregate] Amen.

- Okay, the rest of us are bad people, so we get bad things. He's just a really bad guy, so he gets really bad things. And what happens here? God removes His favor, God loves His blessing. And I'm not saying that Nebuchadnezzar was a believer, but I'm saying that he was blessed. God sometimes blesses unbelievers. You ever met an unbeliever that's blessed?

- [Congregation] Yes.

- You're like, why is it going so well for them? Because this is their heaven, you just need to wait for the real one that God has for you. So, God has been great. He goes like, I gave you a nation, I gave you people, I provided everything. And now He's going to withdraw it. God doesn't need to give anything to Nebuchadnezzar, but He also doesn't need to give anything to Daniel, all of God's work is by grace. And He's gonna remove His provision from this man and his Kingdom. A couple of things I wanna say that'll be controversial, 'cause I haven't done that yet, I wanna make sure I do. All the college professors left a while ago, so you know. Number one, when you fail to own your sin, repent and acknowledge your need for a Savior, you start to go crazy. You start to go crazy. He's going crazy. He's manifesting what we would call mental health. Okay? And if you have sin or evil or folly or rebellion, and God keeps putting a light on, saying that is a problem, let's remove that from your life, this needs to change, Jesus died for it, He'll forgive you, let's extricate it from your life and fill it with God's Holy Spirit's power and presence, if you defy that, you start to go crazy. You start to lose your grip on reality. That's exactly what happens to Nebuchadnezzar. In addition, we are not beasts, we're image bearers of God. Evolution is a lie. We didn't come from animals. But when we continually live apart from God, we start to act like beasts, but we were made as image bearers. And what we see here as well, is that some, what we would call mental health issues, there's actually a clinical diagnosis for this occasion of a human being thinking they're an animal. So, it's still a thing that exists and happens in our day. Some mental health, and wanna be careful with this, some of its physical. Its chemical, its biological, it's physical, you need a doctor, you need a medication, okay? Sometimes it's physical, 'cause our bodies in this fallen world are broken. Sometimes the issue is mental. You've been through trauma or crisis or abuse, and you get triggered and you sort of relive those moments, and you need to mentally figure out how to respond differently than the traditional fight or flight response. So, sometimes mental health, it is physical, you need a doctor and medication. Sometimes, it is mental, you need a counselor and new habits. Sometimes, it's spiritual. Okay? Sometimes it's spiritual. This is where a doctor can treat the body, and a counselor can treat the mind, and I'm for both, we're for both, but only God can work at the level of the soul. And so, what happens here with Nebuchadnezzar, he could go to a doctor, but there's no medication gonna fix his situation. He can go to a counselor, and there's no coping mechanism that will make him healthy and well. What he needs is deliverance. Deliverance is where God shows up in presence in power, and in an instant delivers someone in a supernatural way to where they are forever changed and things are just different. Occasionally, you hear this with people, they'll be like, "I was addicted and God delivered me, "and I haven't had a desire since." It was supernatural. Other people, they're like, "I was physically addicted, "it was a real fight." Others, "I was mentally addicted, "it was a real fight." For other people like, I

was spiritually delivered, the fights over 'cause God won that battle. What he needs is a deliverance. He needs God to deliver him from himself. And I believe here that what's happening is actually demonic possession. I believe that he is so hard-hearted, so proud, so rebellious, and God has been so gracious that he has opened himself up to demonic power. And the reason that I would say this is, well, number one, there's a case study in the New Testament. There's a man who's the demoniac. I don't know if you remember the story. He lives out of town, everybody's scared of him, he's got superhuman strength and dude breaks chains. He is a situation. Medication, counseling, wasn't gonna fix him. God delivers him, the demon's cast out, and then he returns, it says, immediately to his right mind, and he's fine. This is like the Old Testament equivalent of the demoniac. And sometimes the Bible uses the language of beast in regards to demons. Demons are spirit beings that are evil and terrifying and harmful, and they are like beasts in the physical realm, so God will use beastly language on occasion to speak of that which is demonic. I'll give you some examples. Lilith or the night creature or the screech owl is a demon in the Bible. The Bible speaks of Satan and demons as dangerous beasts, it speaks of Satan as a serpent, a dragon, a lion, it speaks of other demons as a python spirit, a goat demon, and wild animals including ostriches, bows, hyenas, birds, scorpions. The Bible also refers to evil people as viper, serpents, goats, cows, dogs, wolves, leeches, donkeys and evil beast. The Bible uses the language of beast to refer to the demonic. So when you see a man who is fully manifesting that which is beastly behind it, it's demonic. Here's what I'm saying, some of you need a doctor. Here's what I'm saying, some of you need a counselor. Here's what I'm saying, some of you need deliverance. You need God to just break whatever is holding you. You need God to break whatever is confusing you. You need to have God show up in presence and power that casts out whatever is evil, replaces it with His glorious and grand goodness so that you can live your new life. I didn't do this at the nine, I'm just gonna pray for it, and then we'll continue in the sermon. Holy Spirit, we pray against the spirit of Babylon, we pray against the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar, we pray against the spirit that would bring people to pride and bondage and independence from the living God. We pray against in the strong Name of Jesus Christ, the Lord rebuke you, our Lord rebuke you, the most high God, rebuke you. God I ask for deliverance over your people. I ask that addictions would be broken. I pray that shame would be lifted. I pray that condemnation would be removed. I pray that Lord God that the voices that they have been listening to would be silence, and that they would only hear the voice of their Lord who loves and leads them into good futures and green pastures. We pray against the enemy, his servants, their works and effects. We acknowledge that there is demonic work in this world, there is demonic work in political movements, in historical realities, in trends on social media. It is found itself into the educational system, and it grips some people in fear and in bondage and in control and in self destruction. So, the Lord rebuke you, and Holy Spirit we welcome you. Fill your children, deliver your children, bring joy to your children, set captives free, for the king of Babylon enslaves, and our King Jesus comes to set captives free. So we invite our King, and His name is...

- [Congregation] Jesus.

- His name is Jesus. Sometimes you need deliverance. Sometimes you need deliverance. The

problem here all begins for Nebuchadnezzar, with pride. It's the problem where Satan began, with pride. God speaks of Satan and says, you became proud in your heart. Again, today, we would have pride parades. We would call this self esteem. It's all demonic. That God opposes the proud and it gives grace to the humble. How do we know? Well, Nebuchadnezzar is the proud, and now he's eating his yard. Okay? That's God opposed to the proud. Daniel was the Unix slave who will for seven years rule as king. Grace to the humble, grace to the humble. CS Lewis says it this way, he's a Christian author. "A proud man is always looking down on things in people." And of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you. Circumstances can humiliate you, but only you can humble you. Some people say, circumstances really humbled me. No, they didn't, they humiliated us. I've had humiliating circumstances, only you can humble you. That's why the Bible says, humble yourself, not your spouse, not your kids, not your neighbor. It's you, okay? Your job is not to humble others. Their job is to humble themselves. And if you think it's your job to humble them, you're not being humble. Okay? He is proud, and what CS Lewis says is this, when you're looking down on people, you can't look up to God. He's literally on the roof of his palace, on a high point in his kingdom, doing what? Looking down on everyone. And he forgets God is looking down on him. And if he would look up, that would humble him. You don't become humble by focusing on humility, you become humble by looking up to the Most High God. Because then you know your place. I am under Him. I am under Him. And when I'm looking at him, you know what? I can't see you. I'm not judging you, I'm not looking down on you, I'm not condemning you, He'll deal with you, He's dealing with me, I'm looking at Him. Okay? So the question is, does Nebuchadnezzar convert? Does he get saved? Does he not only look up, but does he receive forgiveness of sin? And it all reveals Jesus's King. "At the end of the days," seven years, "I, Nebuchadnezzar," he's telling us what happened, "Lifted my eyes to..."

- [Congregate] Heaven.

- I stopped looking down on people and I looked up to God. "And my reason returned to me;" deliverance, "And I blessed the Most High." God, you're awesome, not me. You're great, hey, thanks for all the stuff. Wooh, the yard, that was different, glad to be back, please don't do that again. I now know I'm not the boss. Okay? "And praised." He got an acoustic guitar, he's singing songs, he going on tour. Honored him who lives what? Forever. I'm gonna die and stand before Him. His dominion is everlasting. My kingdom is going down, His is never gone down. His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as? Nothing. That would include Nebuchadnezzar. The dude still has a 90 foot golden statue. He's like, that dude, nothing. What a waste of gold. And he does according to his will. God's in charge among the hosts of heaven, He rules over the unseen realm. And among the inhabitants of the earth, He rules over the seen realm. And non can stay His hand. Can't beat him or say to him, What have you done? God never does anything wrong. At the same time, my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. He got his job back. Just imagine, right? President loses their mind. Every day, the new story is, still sleeping in the White House yard and eating the roses. For seven years. And then they're like, I'm better now. And they're like, welcome back, here's your job. Right? You couldn't get your job

back at Walmart if you did this in the parking lot. God's been very gracious to him. Amen?

- Amen.

- Been very gracious to him. Get the job back. And still more, greatness was added to me. God even poured out more grace on me. God opposes the proud, He gives grace to the humble. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, what? Praise and extol and honor the King of Heaven, the King that's over every king, including me, for all His works are right. Yeah, He was right, I was wrong. His ways are just, I was crooked. And those who walk in pride, I tell you from a little experience, He is able to humble. Here's the question, ready? Did he get saved?

- [Congregate] Yes, sort of.

- Sort of, okay. That's really hedging your bets there brother. Yes or no? How many of you say no? He's just one of those guys, reversible jersey, wants to use God, doesn't wanna go back in the yard. How many of you think he's Kanye? We didn't expect it, look what happened. Right, he's Kanye. He's the Kanye babble. Are like, really? Okay? So, which is it? Which is it? Before we deal with Nebuchadnezzar, let me deal with Daniel. What's Daniel been doing for seven years? Faithfully serving without a coup attempt. How many of you, if it was you, you're like, "Lord, apparently, "I'm supposed to be king now." Right? "I'll take the throne, I'll take the harem "to cook me some to eat. "And while you're at it, go taser the guy in the yard." Right? Right? I shouldn't say it like that, but you know, that's... Who's it, 'cause Daniel was number two, now he's what? He's the number one. He stays in the seat of Jesus, ruling and reigning from the right hand. He never takes the center throne. He served faithfully until his king comes back. Let me tell you this, if he could faithfully serve until that king came back, we can faithfully serve until our King comes back. Amen? He's humble enough to know his place. I'm not the king, but I do serve the King of kings, and I will serve both kings, until the King of kings sends back the other king. Okay? So, there is a debate. Some would say, and the commentators are split. So, this is like a nerd cage fight. They disagree on this. Don't worry, nobody's gonna get hurt. Nobody ever gets hurt in a nerd cage fights. So, some of the scholars will say, he's just using God. Others will say, no, he's like Solomon, who was a bad guy, but wrote Ecclesiastes to apologize. He's like Jonah, who was a bad guy, but wrote Jonah to apologize. He's like the Apostle Paul, God flip teams with that guy. Here's what I would say. Number one, don't worry about other people's salvation, worry about your own. King Jesus will judge King Nebuchadnezzar and judge the rest of us. I don't know if he was saved or not. And you know what, that's not my responsibility. My job is to worry about me. My question is, do you know Jesus? Do you love Jesus? Do you follow Jesus? Is Jesus your King? Do you know that you're a sinner and you need a Savior? Do you know that Daniel came to serve his enemies in Babylon, and Jesus came to serve His enemies on earth? Okay? That our King Jesus, He needs to be your King. Number two, I would say this though, if you look at Nebuchadnezzar and say, I don't think God can save people like that, you might not understand God or salvation. I don't look at Nebuchadnezzar and say, how can you pick that guy? I wake up every morning, I brush my teeth, look in the mirror and ask, how can you pick that guy? I mean, that guy is a real situation. Right? If you understand the grace of

God, you know that it is possible for the grace of God to not only extend to you, but also to those who are like Nebuchadnezzar, your enemies. The true test of your worship of God is whether you're happy when God gives grace to your enemies. Daniel is happy that God gives grace to Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar was his enemy. So, all of this is culminating toward Jesus, and the kingdom of God. Let me just close by reading sort of a summary that pulls this together, and then we're gonna worship. We're gonna look up, look down and so they're gonna look up. Number one, other kings are proud, but our King Jesus is humble. Let me just speak some truth over here. Other kings conquer people and make them slaves, our King Jesus conquers Satan and sets people free. Other kings need our help, our King Jesus needs no help, but is humble enough to help us. Other kings try and change the future, our King Jesus controls the future. Other kings are empowered by the demonic spirit of Babylon, our King Jesus is empowered by the Holy Spirit of God. Other kings rise up and look down on us, but our King Jesus came down to be with us and to lift us up. Other kings rule from fear, but our King Jesus rules from love. Other kings are selfish and cruel, but our King Jesus is selfless and compassionate. Other kings do not repent or forgive, but our King Jesus forgives all who repent. Other kings make their kingdom with human hands, our King Jesus has a kingdom not built by human hands. Other kings are worshiped by people who are forced to worship them, our King Jesus is worshiped by people who freely worship Him. Other kings put us in their fiery furnace, our King Jesus joins us in our fiery furnace. Other kings pray for their kingdom to come, our King Jesus taught us to pray, thy kingdom come. Other kings die and stand before our King Jesus, and other kings are not ruling and reigning today, and our King Jesus rules and reigns every day, forever and ever and ever and ever. Amen. Father, God, thank you, thank you, thank you, for the story of Daniel. Lord, we look up. Lord Jesus, I'm just reminded, when you hung on the cross in our place for our sins, the only way that sinners could see you was to look up, to stop looking down on others and start looking up to the one that they need. Lord Jesus, you've been exalted, you now rule and reign, you are seated on a throne. Right now in your presence are the souls of departed saints, right now are divine beings, angels, the holy ones, the watchers. Lord Jesus, you are being worshiped, you are ruling and reigning. You are setting up and taking down kings and kingdoms. You are orchestrating all of history perfectly and majestically for us to inherit eternity. Lord Jesus, we look up to you. We look up to your sacrifice, we look up to your victory, we look up to your rule and reign, we look up to your second coming. And Lord Jesus, as we look up, humble us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Fill us with the power of the Holy Spirit. God, we live in Babylon. And those same forces that were against Daniel are against us. And those same temptations that ensnared Nebuchadnezzar, tempt us. So we asked for the power of your presence. For all the children of God who are struggling, I pray for deliverance. For those who are discouraged, I pray for courage. For those who are tempted, I pray for repentance. And Lord God, we invite the Holy Spirit to make us like Daniel. And God we just remind ourselves, right now, Daniel, is serving his real King. Right now, Daniel is in the presence of Jesus Christ. And so, until we see you face to face, Lord Jesus, let us serve our king, as we pray thy kingdom come. In Jesus name. Amen.