

# GODLY LIVING IN A GODLESS WORLD

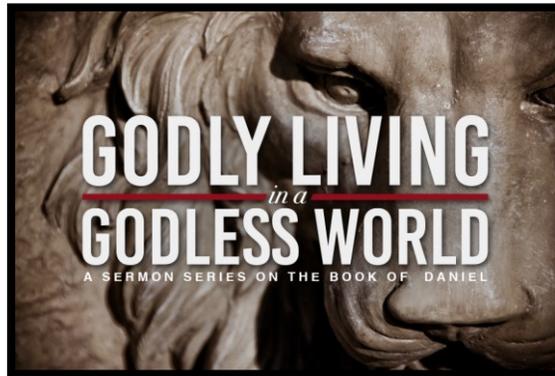
## Expositional Study Of Daniel

Daniel 4:10-37

Written By

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As a thirty-one-year-old new pastor of a church plant, I jumped at the opportunity to share God-honoring dating principles with an Italian mother who wanted to make sure her teens had a good, godly grid as they headed into dating world. She attended another church, but thought my age and experience would better impact her children. Her husband, a very successful and wealthy businessman, didn't care about her plans at all because he enjoyed being an in-your-face taunting-type of atheist. Actually, he vehemently opposed them talking to me, and he really took issue with the fact I met with the family in their home to discuss the educational details.

Over the next few months, I meet numerous times with these nice, polite three children, sharing with them how to date in a fashion that would give God glory and would also help them chose good life-mates in the end. When we finished our sessions, I didn't see them again for several years, but I did bump into the mother here and there in the community.

One day, I received an interesting phone call. The man in question lost his aged mother and wanted someone to perform the service. To his wife's amazement, he said, "Could you contact Pastor Marty and see if he would give leadership to my mother's funeral?" I accepted the request. When I met with the family to work out the details, I informed the man I would be speaking about the his mother's faith and the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He said he could live with that, but from what I heard from his wife later, he really wasn't excited about it.

When I conducted the service, you could feel the hostile tension in the air from him, but he remained respectful. We shook hands at several points, I told him I had been praying for him,

and he smiled as if to say, “Yeah, for whatever that’s worth.” After a final song and prayer, the pain of the day, emotionally and spiritually, ended for him ... or so it seemed.

Several years later I heard through friends this wealthy, cocky, demeaning atheist contracted inoperable cancer. Later, friends told me he, of all people, embraced Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord. For that last year of his life, to everyone’s shock and surprise, he, the devilish debater and sacker of saints, became an amazing verbal witness to the power of the gospel of Jesus to change a person. When he died, he died with the peace of knowing heaven awaited him, along with the opportunity to embrace his godly mother.

And to think, his salvation journey literally covered almost the entire nineteen years I pastored that little church plant. But God never let him go. He providentially worked in his life to cause him to see his need to lay his unbelief at the foot of the cross and pick up life-giving faith instead. I’m still amazed that he, of all people, came to faith in the Savior. Such is the love and power of God.

Can you identify with this man’s journey? Perhaps God has been working on your spiritually caustic life for years. At numerous junctures He has forced you to stop and consider your need to step off the throne of your life and place Him there, but up to this point, you are still pushing Him away. I have news for you. From what I see from how God pursued King Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful potentate in his day and time, He is not finished with you. We learn this rich truth from the king’s journey to salvation as retold by him in Daniel chapter 4. From a cursory reading of the passage, the main idea easily surfaces:

### God Seeks In Order To Save (Daniel 4:1-37)

As I’ve said, Nebuchadnezzar’s journey to redemptive faith involved nine steps. These steps are not set in stone, but you just might find some of them occurring in your life. Let’s review the one’s we’ve covered so far.

#### You’ll Encounter A Ripple (Daniel 4:1-5)

Translated, God will bring events to your life to cause you to see the vacuous nature of your current worldview.

#### You Will Encounter Reticence (Daniel 4:6-7)

Translated, instead of turning to Christian people who have the most logical worldview which explains why there is something instead of nothing and why we are on this planet, your revert back to seeking advice and counsel from those who hold to your shaky belief system. They, in turn, will really have nothing to give you because they can’t answer epistemological questions either.

#### You’ll Encounter A Revealer (Daniel 4:8-9)

Translated, you will be moved to touch base with a Christian God has providentially placed in your life, someone you know knows and walks with Him. Instead of arguing with him/her, you will sit quietly and ask them to answer you complex, perplexing life questions.

## You'll Encounter Reality (Daniel 4:10-17)

Although we don't see it in the text, it seems logical to conclude that once Daniel entered the king's throne room he must have said, "Sir, tell me, what is bothering and troubling you?" From verse 10 through 17, the unsettled king unloads his dump truck of emotional and spiritual perplexity. Read through these verses and you'll see what I mean.

Everything about King Nebuchadnezzar is colossal and larger than life: the metallic statue from his dream in chapter 2, the massive ninety-foot golden image he had constructed as detailed in chapter 3, and now an off-the-charts tree of all trees. Obviously, all of this divinely ordered imagery underscored not only the political and financial prowess of this self-made politician, but it also highlighted his massive problem with, you guessed it, pride. God has a unique way of tapping into your life, into, say, your achievements to cause you to all of a sudden see your sin in bold relief.

From verses 10 through 12, the dream seemed all so positive and intriguing. An elegant, beautiful tree grew to the point it reached the heavens, its massive branches covered the earth, and animals and birds received sustenance from its fruit and relief from the scorching sun within the confines of the shade it produced. The king must have wondered, "What or who does this tree represent?"

A positive motif headed due south from verses 13 through 17. The *waw* "and" connected to the interjection, "behold" states a powerful contrast in the flow of the story. "

וְאֵלֹהֵי עִיר וְקֹדֵשׁ מִן־שָׁמַיָּא נִחַת

"A watcher" (עִיר) or "a holy one" (וְקֹדֵשׁ) is a unique use of Hebrew phrase. The first word is only used here in the Old Testament with reference to a heavenly being of some sorts. Lexically, the word means to watch with vigilance, something akin to a guard or sentinel.<sup>1</sup> Babylonians believed in a class of thirty angels who were responsible for overseeing activities on earth. Fifteen of them governed events on the earth's surface and fifteen concerned themselves with the underworld. Every ten days one angel from these groups went to the other to communicate their governing details and issue.<sup>2</sup> The king might be associating this being with those beings simply because he did not possess a biblical framework. From our perspective, however, this was an angel of God. Classifying it as a "holy one," *qadish*, echoes one of the key names of the living God through the Old Testament as the Holy One, *qedosh* (2 Kings 19:22; Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 1:4; 5:19,

<sup>1</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Aramaic (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 10541 עִיר ( 'ir): n.masc.; ≡ Str 5894; TWOT 2907—1. LN 12.28 **messenger** (NIV), i.e., an angel that delivers a communication from God (Da 4:10[EB 13],14[EB 17],20[EB 23]+), for another interp, see next; 2. LN 12.1–12.42 (most versions) **watcher**, sentinel, one who is awake and so acts as a guard and protector, i.e., a class of supernatural being with similar functions as an angel, but also distinct from them (Da 4:10[EB 13],14[EB 17],20[EB 23]).

<sup>2</sup> C.F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 149.

24; 10:17, 20). Daniel will also use this word to denote two angels in communication with each other in chapter 8, verse 13,

וַאֲשַׁמְעָה אֶחָד־קְרוֹשׁ מְדַבֵּר וַיֹּאמֶר אֶחָד קְרוֹשׁ לְפִלְמוֹנִי

Isn't it interesting how God uses words and concepts the lost person is familiar with to slowly get their spiritual attention? The angel's mission is not good news for the beautiful, powerful tree.

<sup>14</sup> He shouted out and spoke as follows: "Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit; Let the beasts flee from under it, And the birds from its branches. <sup>15</sup> Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field; and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth. <sup>16</sup> Let his mind be changed from that of a man, and let a beast's mind be given to him, and let seven periods of time pass over him.

Shocking. The angelic being called for a complete decimation of the once glorious, beneficial tree. This was the part of the dream which became a nightmare for the spiritually sensitive king. What did it mean? Who did it refer to? He just had to know.

A couple of observations are in order regarding the command of the angel: (1) Angels can be called at God's bidding to bring swift judgment on a massive scale when God's judgment is ripe; (2) The loss of the fruit-bearing tree impacted the then known world in a negative fashion. No longer would it be around to benefit others; (3) Leaving a stump meant there was potential for re-growth; (4) The change from the pronoun "it" to the personal pronoun "him" in verses 15 reveals the dream is about one man in particular; (5) Placing an iron and bronze band could be tied to the stump for its protection, or it could reference the man in question; (6) The nameless man would quickly lose his lofty place on earth and be reduced to animal of sorts; and (7) The divinely ordered judgment would last seven periods of an unspecified length. With all this in mind, no wonder the king sought some godly counsel.

With verse 17, Nebuchadnezzar relayed the angelic insight he received at the end of the nightmare:

<sup>17</sup> This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers and the decision is a command of the holy ones, **in order that** the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes and sets over it the lowliest of men.

The temporal prepositional phrase in the second clause denoted by "in order that" ( **עַד־דִּבְרָתָ** ) expresses the purpose of the tree tragedy: The Most High God wants all mankind, not just the man in question, to realize that He, and He alone, is the ruler over all of mankind and that He gives political power to whomever He wishes (to accomplish His purposes, of course). It's a message God has given to Nebuchadnezzar before: "And it is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, and knowledge to men of understanding (Daniel 2:21). Obviously, years earlier he failed to listen so it appears God has given him the rude

reality one more time. “You are not in charge, I am. You didn’t make yourself king, I permitted you to enjoy this political power.” But this is getting ahead of ourselves because at this juncture the thick-headed sovereign is still clueless what the problematic dream means.

You just might identify. Perhaps God has given you a wake-up call, of sorts, regarding the useless nature of your current view of life and why you are here. He could have employed a word from a person, a snippet from the *God Is Not Dead 2* movie your wife and kids drug you to, a sermon you just happened to stumble upon, a book you just happened to read from a Christian writer and/or apologist, or a real-life tragedy you experience. The point can’t be missed. Because God loves you, He is in pursuit of your soul and He will do what is absolutely necessary to wake you up to your spiritual condition and need for a faith relationship with Him. More on that in a moment.

After God shakes your carnal cage of unbelief, expect the next course of action in His plan for you:

### You’ll Encounter A Revelation (Daniel 4:19-27)

God will not leave you hanging in suspense in your quest to find solutions to your spiritual dilemma. No, out of love, He will help you connect the sometimes uncomfortable dots in your life so you can understand what you need to do to head to spiritual health, wholeness, and joy. That’s what He did for King Nebuchadnezzar.

The first flash of rare spiritual insight was not good news for the frustrated, perplexed king. Verses 19 through 26 make this clear:

<sup>19</sup> Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, ‘Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.’ Belteshazzar replied, ‘My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries!’

Before we dig into the meaning of the colossal tree imagery, we can’t pass up the action of Daniel. Mark well his gentle, kind evangelistic approach to the godless ruler. He comforts him, and even says he wished the meaning of the divinely ordained dream applied to the king’s enemies. Amazing. What grace. However, none of this deterred Daniel from being candid and honest with the biblical truth: God was going to judge the king for his sinful activity in hopes of getting his spiritual attention. Gulp. All of this leads to two pragmatic questions: (1) When you share the gospel and your faith with the lost is it with a gentle, compassionate spirit, or is it legalistic, biting, and condescending? (2) When you witness for Christ, do you boldly give the bad news of the gospel before the good news? Do you express how man is a sinner under God’s judgment (Romans 1:1-2:10; 3:23; 5:12-21; 6:23). Before there can be confession there must be an understanding of one’s guilt and impending judgment before the living God. Will you say what needs sayin’? Daniel did and he did it to someone you would never believe would come to the faith in a million years.

With grace, then, Daniel dove in headfirst with the explanation/interpretation:

<sup>20</sup> ‘The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth <sup>21</sup> and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the

beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged—<sup>22</sup> it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth.

Verse 22 emphatically equates the tree to the king by placing the pronoun first in the sentence and by leaving out a verbal copula (“to be”). The word “tree” is also not in the original Hebrew text. Literally, the opening clause exclaims, “You ... that ... king!” All of this ellipsis of key words just heightens the divine message.

Nebuchadnezzar was that powerful, wealthy king who ruled the earth and who provided for people everywhere, and, indeed, he did. His name is still stamped on many of the bricks from his once glorious fortress city. Some 15 million bricks composed the outer wall of his magnificent city which straddled the mighty Euphrates, the river which divided the town down the middle between the new and old city. Entrance from the north was through the famous forty foot tall Ishtar Gate, constructed by Nebuchadnezzar out of bricks glazed with a bluish color and adorned with dragons and bulls. Heading south through this glorious gate, the Temple of Etemenanki, or Marduk, the key god in their culture, loomed some 300 feet in the air above you to your left. It must have been breathtaking in its beauty. Nebuchadnezzar’s lush hanging, terrace gardens would have been an amazing sight in an arid location. Yes, everything about Nebuchadnezzar dripped of wealth, power, prestige, and ultimate beauty. He was the wonderful tree, but he had a terrible spiritual problem, a problem God wanted him to understand so he could trade spiritual death for spiritual life.

Daniel’s words are as unnerving as they are honest ... as any presentation of the gospel should be:

<sup>23</sup> ‘In that the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, “Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him,”<sup>24</sup> this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king:<sup>25</sup> that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.<sup>26</sup> ‘And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules.

God’s word to Nebuchadnezzar couldn’t have been clearer: You have a pride problem and it must be dealt with in a definitive fashion if you are ever going to have the ability to see your need of me, the Most High God, in your life. Through Daniel, who now acts like a true prophet of God by dispensing the prospects of judgment, the king learns his political tree will be reduced to a stump for seven periods. This is most ironic. He had formerly heated the furnace seven times hotter to get rid of Daniel’s godly friends, and now God will judge him in a seven-fold fashion. Poetic. Don’t delude yourself into thinking God will always put up with your unbelief and self-worship. Out of love for you He will work to cause you to consider Him.

Daniel is quite clear that God was going to reduce this powerful, wealthy potentate. Why? Once more, God is most explicit as He employs the temporal prepositional phrase again. This judgment will unfold, as God states, ...

... until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes. <sup>26</sup> 'And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules.

God will reduce a man in order to reach a man. He did it to Nebuchadnezzar. He will do it do you, too, because He loves you and He wants you to be a viable part of His eternal kingdom. Maybe He's reducing you right now. You're worried. Things are falling apart. Life is turning against you. Your former worldview which used to bring you comfort, is sporting leaks galore, and you know it. As C. S. Lewis said so well years ago, "*God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.*"<sup>3</sup> And as he reduces you, realize there is always grace and mercy. God could have vaporized Nebuchadnezzar for leading an intrinsically evil empire; however, he left him a stump to denote that if he made the right spiritual choice God would bless Him beyond measure. The same truth holds true for you today, as well. You might be at the stump stage, but blessing awaits you if you will just turn to God and recognize Him, by faith, as your God.

So, get real. Has the Most High God given you a spiritual revelation you just can't shake? If this is the case, which I'm sure it is, then prepare for the next part of your spiritual journey toward a faith relationship with the Jesus Christ, the Most High God.

### You'll Encounter A Request (Daniel 4:27)

Just what might the request be? First, we must ask, Who does the request come from? A believer, like Daniel:

Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness, and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.'

The king hadn't asked for this information, so this was a risky, courageous step for Daniel to take. Protestants and Catholics have debated these words for years all because of a mis-translation of the Hebrew text by the Latin Vulgate, which reads, "*Cancel thy sins by deeds of charity and thine iniquities by deeds of kindness to the poor.*" This is not how the Hebrew reads, at all. Nebuchadnezzar wasn't promised spiritual redemption based on his righteous works. This would be salvation by works, which is the antithesis of the gospel (Ephesians 2:2-10), and it would negate the work of Jesus Christ, as Paul argues so will in Galatians 2:14-21.

What is Daniel talking about? Keil and Delitzsch capture the Hebrew meaning with clarity:

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<sup>3</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1957), 81.

But this translation of the first passage is verbally false; for פָּרַק does not mean *to redeem, to ransom*, and צָדָקָה does not mean *alms or charity*. פָּרַק means *to break off, to break in pieces*, hence *to separate, to disjoin, to put at a distance*; see under Gen. 27:40. And though in the Targg. פָּרַק is used for גָּאַל, פָּדָה, *to loosen, to unbind*, of redeeming, ransoming of the first-born, an inheritance or any other valuable possession, yet this use of the word by no means accords with sins as the object, because sins are not goods which one redeems or ransoms so as to retain them for his own use. פָּרַק חַטֵּי can only mean *to throw away sins, to set one's self free from sins*. צָדָקָה nowhere in the O.T. means *well-doing or alms*. This meaning the self-righteous Rabbis first gave to the word in their writings. Daniel recommends the king to practice righteousness ...<sup>4</sup>

Daniel isn't, at this point, telling the king how to be saved. God has already told him that. He must recognize God as the true, eternal Sovereign of all sovereigns, as Lord of and over his life. All Daniel is doing here is telling the king God might grant him some additional time, not perpetual time, of personal blessing, but he'd first have to clean up his messy political act by treating the less fortunate in his kingdom better.

This is simply amazing. God doesn't tell the prideful politician to tax his people more so he can spread the wealth around and help more people. He tells HIM to do HIS part in touching the lives of the less fortunate, which is the exact opposite activity you will find from a self-absorbed politician ... or person for that matter. The more prideful a person is the greater their disdain for needy people, and the more rationalizations they will concoct to appear righteous and caring. But it's all just a short-lived smoke screen God sees right through.

How does this apply to your spiritual journey? God will drop godly people into your life who will either, by word or by deed, show you that your life is far afield from what God desires no matter how great your thoughts are about yourself. Had anyone like this lately in your life? Had anyone who walks with God call you out? Had a Christian nicely tell you that you're skilled at lording yourself over the less fortunate and by-passing those in your life who have real needs, all while you make sure you really take care of yourself? It's funny how a short conversation like this can arrest the mind and focus one on what God might expect from a life.

As you're pondering which path you shall take, there is another signpoint on the path up ahead. It reads ...

### You'll Engage In Rationalizations (Daniel 4:28-30)

If God is speaking to you, the worst thing you can do is procrastinate and drag your feet. Why do I say this? It's simple. The more time you put between God rattling your spiritual cage and bowing before Him in faith, the ol' Devil will place events, thoughts, and teachings so forth before you cleverly designed to help you rationalize away faith in God. Consider King Nebuchadnezzar's life choice:

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<sup>4</sup> C.F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 156.

<sup>28</sup>All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. <sup>29</sup> Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon.

As he had done for so many years after divine intervention in his life, the king walked away from some of God's best outreach work. For twelve months he distanced himself from God, and for twelve months God showed amazing grace. Makes you want to ask yourself, Is the blessing on my current life keeping me from God by thinking it will always go this way? Be not deceived as Solomon warns in Ecclesiastes, "*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil*" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). Also, you need to ask yourself, Am I purposefully dragging my feet again regarding spiritual matters? That's a dangerous business to engage in because God does not always have to pursue you. It's also dangerous because the Devil will be sure to exploit your weaknesses to further blind you to your need for God. In Nebuchadnezzar's case, that weakness involved one word, PRIDE.

<sup>30</sup> The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'

Standing on the roof of his palatial palace, the king had an excellent vantage point to view the glittering, immense city he had constructed. Taking it all in and thinking about his part in making all of this beauty happen, pride exploded in his heart. Underscore and emphasize his use of "I" and "my" here. What is a non-believer's life all about? It's all about them, what they've accomplished, how much they are worth, how many degrees they have, where they work (and where you don't work), what they drive (and what you don't drive), where they live (and where you don't live), and how smart they are (and how smart you are not), and so on and so forth ad nauseum. Stop and get real. Really, how are you using personal pronouns in your life?

Pride in his accomplishments, in his rich legacy kept Nebuchadnezzar from God. It was a value system straight out of the pit of hell and it just might embody values you currently hold. What about you? What is keeping you from that same God who loves you, but hates your darkness? If you don't eventually turn to Him, note He will employ various things to wake you up to spiritual reality.

### You'll Experience A Rebuff (Daniel 4:31-33)

To continue to rebuff God is to eventually meet with His rebuff, or should I say, discipline:

<sup>31</sup> While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, <sup>32</sup> and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.' <sup>33</sup> "Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was

drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

Scholars theorize God hit Nebuchadnezzar with lycanthropy, a disease in which a man thinks of himself as a beast or even a werewolf. Given the fact, as John Walvoord and Charles Dwyer point out, that “[h]air grows at the rate of one-half inch per month (six inches per year), and fingernails grow an average of one and a quarter inches per year,” thinking this deranged state lasted only a few months, or a year is unreasonable. When the Septuagint notes this period lasted some seven years, they are probably correct. Also, because King Nebuchadnezzar also typically represents the final world leader, the Anti-Christ, and because that ruler’s time period is limited to 7 years according to Daniel 9:24-27, we are probably safe to say he had seven years of wandering in the demented wilderness.

This whole historical episode lays to rest the atheistic syllogistic argument constructed to disprove God. It goes like this:

- An all-good God must have a good purpose for everything.
- But there is no good purpose for some suffering.
- Hence, there cannot be an all-good God.

The weakness of the syllogistic argument rests upon a couple of logical responses: (1) Just because we, as finite creatures, do not know a good purpose for evil in our world does not mean there is not purpose. Further, an all-good and all-knowing God would, by definition, know how to use everything in life, the good and the bad, to accomplish His lofty, infinite, eternal purposes; (2) We do not know all things, nor do we know the end of all things; however, an infinite, all-knowing God would, and does, by default. Hence, it is untenable to say there is no purpose in the so-called tragedies of life.

Nebuchadnezzar’s personal calamity had God’s fingerprints written all over it and it was specifically designed to drive him to a point of spiritual faith. When the divinely appointed time for the psychological disease ended, Nebuchadnezzar returned to his senses. Again, there is a reason we love to sing the song *Amazing Grace*.

The king’s plight should cause you to stop and ponder your own current situation. That calamity you are facing right now might just be divinely orchestrated to move you away from disbelief to belief in Jesus as your Redeemer. Whether you head in that direction is your free-will choice. Pain does, in fact, shape and hone the soul for greater things. How will you view and respond to your “lycanthropy?”

If God gets your spiritual attention, if you move toward Him and not toward bitterness and anger, the last step of our arduous journey will most likely be this one ...

## You’ll Be Encouraged To Embrace Repentance (Daniel 4:33-37)

I’ll let the transformed king speak for himself:

<sup>34</sup> But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward 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. <sup>35</sup> All the inhabitants of

the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' <sup>36</sup> At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. <sup>37</sup> Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.

Powerful, moving words spoken by a man who FINALLY embraced the Lord as His Lord. This is certainly a new man talking. What does his spiritual journey teach us? To look around is to go down! To look around is to get bound! The remedy? You gotta' look up to go up! (Psalm 123:1; John 3:14-16). Where are you looking?