

THE KING OF KINGS

DANIEL 4:34-37

# OUR KING CONVERTS THE LOST



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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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# INTRODUCTION

Can he ever be converted? Can she ever be converted? We all think that at times, don't we? We see someone hating God and hating God fighting God, and we think, "There's no hope for him/her. They're too far gone. There's no point in even praying for them. They will never be converted to Christ, they will never change. They are too lost."

Or maybe you've thought or said this about yourself. Perhaps your question is, "Can I ever be converted?" You're sure you've gone far too far, for far too long, and you've given up hope of God's mercy and love. Your heart is too hard for God to reach. You are too lost.

Whether you despair of yourself or others, I present you with King Nebuchadnezzar's auto-biography, his testimony of how God's Story changed his story. Use it to give you hope for yourself and others you've grown hopeless about. His biography is entitled *No One Is Too Lost*, and its message is, **Believe anyone can be converted.**

## BACKGROUND

**Theme of Daniel:** The King of kings is still King. God's sovereignty is taught in God over-ruling for the good of his people (ch. 1), in God giving Daniel the dream and its interpretation (ch. 2), in God preserving Daniel's friends in the furnace (ch. 3), and in the King of kings humbling of the greatest earthly king (ch. 4).

**Structure of Daniel:**

- Faithful Living in Hostile Times (1-6)
- Forward Looking in Hostile Times (7-12)

**The story so far**

- Be faithful because our King Cares for us (Daniel 1)
- Be faithful because our King Communicates with us (Daniel 2:1-30)
- Be faithful because our King Conquers for us (Daniel 2:31-49)
- Be faithful because our King Commands us (Daniel 3)
- Be faithful because our King Condemns the Proud (Daniel 4:1-33)
- Be faithful because our King Converts the Lost (Daniel 4:34-37)

Last week, we saw God's judgment bring down proud Nebuchadnezzar. This week we will see God's grace lift up humble Nebuchadnezzar. God used Nebuchadnezzar to give us hope that anyone can be converted and to show us what true conversion looks like.



What's the first step in true conversion?



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# 1. CONVERSION IS FROM HEAVEN (34)

*At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven* (34).

Seven years earlier, Nebuchadnezzar was on the rooftop looking down on everyone and everything (29-30). It was a picture of his high and haughty heart. He looked around at the glories of Babylon and saw himself reflected in them. He looked downwards and sideways but never upwards.

Now, though, his eyes look upwards, heavenwards. The direction of his eyes have changed because the nature of his heart has changed. He's looking away from earth to heaven, from people to God, from self to the Savior. It's the look of a servant to his Master, not of a Master to his servant. He's no longer the center of the universe, but a speck in the universe. He's no longer looking at what he did, but what God has done. He summed up this moment earlier in the chapter: **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!** (2-3) The glimmer of hope Daniel held out to Nebuchadnezzar is burning brightly (32).

## CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Where are you looking? Conversion comes from heaven not earth, from God not people. If we want converted, our eyes have to look up. When our weak and lowly eyes lock on God's strong and mighty eyes, there's a saving transfer of power. Let's lift our eyes to heaven for ourselves and for others who are lost. Lets lock our eyes on God and find freeing power.

LOOKING DOWN LETS US DOWN,  
BUT LOOKING UP LIFTS US UP



When I look up, what does God do?  
He gives us reason



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## 2. CONVERSION RESTORES OUR REASON (34)

*And my reason was returned to me* (34).

The king is confessing that sin warped, twisted, and confused his thinking. That was true, not just when he was eating grass like a cow for seven years, but when he was eating steak as a king before that. He was unreasonable *before* he was inhuman. God's judgment just made visible what had previously been invisible (Ps. 73:22).

By mentioning the return of his reason, Nebuchadnezzar was confessing, "Sin made me unreasonable, irrational, and illogical because sin separated me from God, the source of all reason, rationality, and logic.

When the king looked to God, his logic returned. He was no longer thinking without God, or against God, but like God. He was thinking God's thoughts after him, which is the highest reasoning (Isa. 55:8-9). The image of God was being restored in him. God doesn't bypass reason in conversion, but addresses it, enlightens it, purifies it, and strengthens it by faith.

### CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Faith is reasonable. Don't oppose reason and faith but use them to support and strengthen each other. The best believers are the best reasoners. God is a reasonable God and uses reason to present the Gospel and appeal to the mind. But the Gospel also frees the reason so that the believer operates at a higher level than any philosopher or scientist.

WE USE REASON TO BELIEVE BETTER  
AND BELIEVE IN ORDER TO REASON BETTER



Conversion changes our eyes and our reason.  
What else?



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### 3. CONVERSION CHANGES OUR WORSHIP (34)

*...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 (34).*

Nebuchadnezzar had previously honored God with his lips (2:47; 3:28-29,) but now he honors him with his heart. He had previously adored himself, but now he is adoring God. He praises God's supremacy, his foreverness, his sovereignty, and his covenant faithfulness (Ex. 20:5-6; Ps. 103:17-18).

The chapter summary at the beginning contains similar themes (4:2-3) as does the chapter conclusion. **Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just (37).**

The king had no complaints about how God had treated him. He'd been humiliated for seven years. As livestock he'd been a laughing-stock. Seven years naked, seven years eating grass, seven years on all fours, and seven years without haircut or manicure. Seven years looking like an animal, sounding like an animal, eating like an animal, and smelling like an animal. Yet how did the king speak about the God who did this to him? **All his works are right and his ways are just.** He didn't have a bad word to say about God, but only spoke good of him (Ps. 103:10; Lk. 23:41). He vindicates God and praises him as highly as he possibly can.

#### CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Conversion changes who we worship, when we worship, why we worship, what we worship, where we worship, and how we worship. Like Nebuchadnezzar, I spent way too many years worshipping myself and worshipping soccer. I went to church and I sang the songs, but I never worshipped. Worship bored me and I couldn't wait for it to finish so I could get on with my self-worship again. Now, worship is my favorite time of the week. It's such a blessing to me in so many different ways. I love to praise God rather than spend my days trying to get people to praise me. I love thinking about God more than myself. We raise God by praising God.

WORSHIP CHANGES  
OUR SONGS AND OUR TUNES



So, how can I lift God even higher.  
We can get even lower.



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## 4. CONVERSION HUMBLER OUR HEARTS (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?" ...those who walk in pride he is able to humble (35, 37).*

If we want to improve our worship, we need to work in two directions: raising God higher, and lowering ourselves deeper. The bigger the gap between these two directions, the more pleasing worship is to God and the beneficial it is to us.

When a heart begins to promote God, it always demotes itself. It's like a balancing scale. Before conversion, our side was weighty and God's was light. After conversion, most of the weight is transferred from our side to God's side. It's never a complete transfer however, and sometimes the weight sneaks back over to our side. That's why we need sanctification; it's to keep transferring weight and worship from us to God. In Nebuchadnezzar's case, providence did the transfer. But God also uses Bible reading, worship, fellowship, and Christian service to transfer grains of worship from our side to God's.

Now that the king has been humbled, it's safe to raise him up again. The monster has become a child, therefore the child can become king again. God not only restored his reason, he restored his royalty (36). God lowers the proud but lifts the humble (Luke 14:11).

### CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

**No one is too lost.** God is able to humble the highest, hardest, haughtiest heart. No one is too lost. Do not despair of yourself or of anyone else. Look at how God changed this king and I dare you to say, "God cannot do that for you or another person."

**Tell your story.** Nebuchadnezzar told his conversion story in this chapter. He told how God changed his story with His Story. So why don't you tell yours? God uses stories and testimonies from his people to convert and save others.

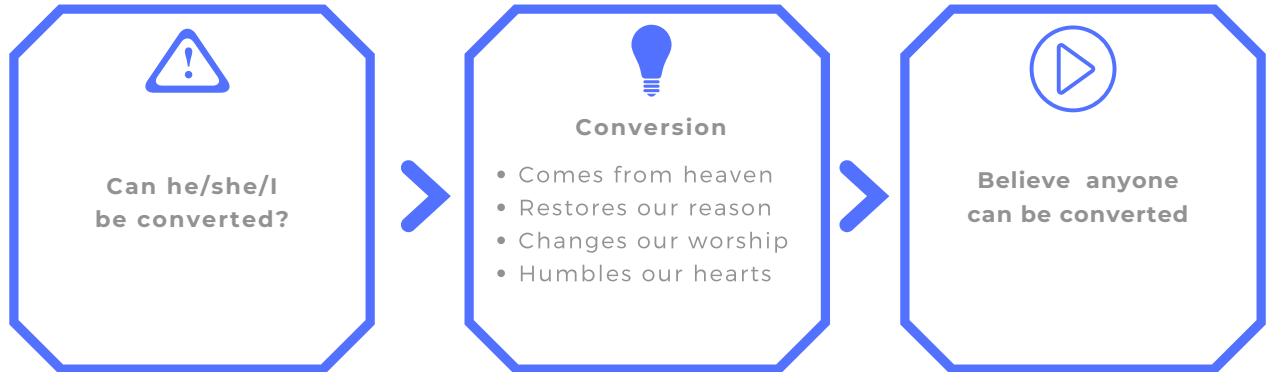
GOD DOESN'T SAVE EVERYONE  
BUT HE CAN SAVE ANYONE

Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell your new story



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# CONCLUSION



**PRAYER:** King of Kings, you can convert the worst, therefore convert and encourage us with the signs of true conversion. Amen.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who have you ever given up hope for and why?
2. If someone asked you, "How can I be converted?" how would you answer?
3. How do reason and faith work together?
4. How would you compare your worship before and after conversion?
5. What's your spiritual biography?
6. Who will you tell your story to this week?

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