

INTRODUCTION

You could also call this chapter: “From Beauty to Beast” or “The Birdman of Babylon.”

Sadaam Hussein is the Dictator of Iraq. This week he posted a message on the Internet stating he has become a Christian. Part of it says: “I realized recently that for the past seven years I have been out of my mind—I have been acting like a beast. In the past few days God has opened my eyes—I have denounced Islam and I am now trusting the God of Israel—I have given my heart to Jesus Christ and I plan on spending the rest of my days serving Him.”

Wow! What a stunning development! But it is not true. I just made it up. (And don’t believe everything you read on the Internet!) But I hope it got your attention, because Sadaam Hussein is not the first Wacky Iraqi. 2,600 years ago, there was another king who reigned over the same territory. His name was Nebuchadnezzar—and he really did have a conversion experience! That’s what Daniel 4 is all about. Nebuchadnezzar has been converted to faith in God and chapter four is his personal testimony. It is a book within a book.

Let’s look at verse 1 and 2, “King Nebuchadnezzar to the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world: May you prosper greatly! It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.”

Then the next few verses sound like a Psalm. They are written by a man who has been totally changed. “How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.”

The same guy who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fiery furnace in chapter 3 writes this. This is same man who, even after seeing God’s power, decreed that anyone who spoke against the God of Heaven would be cut up into tiny pieces and their house destroyed. This is a changed man.

Let’s study his testimony today. First we will look at what happened to old Nebuchadnezzar and then we will talk about what it means for us today. First, let’s consider:

SCENE ONE: A DREAM RECEIVED (4-18)

Now about 30 years has elapsed between chapter 3 and this chapter. Daniel is probably in his mid fifties and Nebuchadnezzar is approaching 70. Let’s study Nebuchadnezzar’s testimony. Look at verse 4, “I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace contented and prosperous. I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me.”

Uh, oh—another dream. This dream is of a massive tree, healthy and thriving. Then skip down in verses 13-16 to see what scared Nebuchadnezzar:

“In the visions I saw while lying in my bed, I looked, and there before me was a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. He called in a loud voice: ‘cut down the tree and trim off

its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground in the grass of the field. Let him [a person, now, not a tree] be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live the animals among the plants of the earth. Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times [years] pass by for him.”

Well, old Nebuchadnezzar sends for his wise men, again. “Tell me what this dream means!” And it says they couldn’t interpret it (when will Nebuchadnezzar learn?) Finally he sends for his star player: Daniel.

SCENE TWO: A DREAM REVEALED (19-27)

Look at verse 19: “Then Daniel (also called Beltshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, ‘Beltshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.’ Beltshazzar answered, ‘My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the beasts of the field, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds of the air—you O king, are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.”

But if you remember in the dream, an angel takes a heavenly chain saw, cranks it, revs it up a couple of times and then proceeds to cut the tree down. Timber! Remember, the bigger they are, the harder they fall.

Verse 25: “You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes. The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge the Heaven rules.”

Now that’s the end of the dream, at this point, Daniel preaches a personal sermon for the king. In verse 27, “Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”

Verse 19 says Daniel stood there “perplexed.” You could say he was dumbfounded. When he realized the implications of the dream, the KJV says he was “astonished for one hour.” Why did Daniel hesitate? Nobody enjoys delivering bad news. I can’t imagine how hard it would be for a state trooper or a policeman to knock on a door and tell someone his or her child has been killed in a wreck. I’ve had the experience several times of delivering news to a family member that a loved one has just died in the hospital, or in the ER, it’s not easy. So, Daniel hesitates.

By the way, I’m a positive pastor, and I always try to present the good news. But I also don’t shy away from preaching the bad news, although I don’t enjoy it. But the good news wouldn’t be so

good if the bad news wasn't so bad. Heaven wouldn't be so good if you didn't know there really is a hell that is bad. Salvation wouldn't be so glorious unless you understood the bad news that each of us is a sinner headed for hell.

I imagine Daniel developed a fondness for Nebuchadnezzar through the years. I believe he had come to love the old King, so he hated to tell him. But because he loved him, he had to warn him. I think the most loving thing we can do is to tell people there is a hell, and God loves them so much He sent his only Son so they will never spend a second there.

Notice Daniel doesn't just stop with the bad news. He tells him what to do. Look at verse 27. "Renounce your sins by doing right." "Repent!" That's what Daniel said. He warned him about what was going to happen unless he repented. God's message is grave. You are going to suffer, but if you repent right now, it could be you will miss this terrible experience.

Have you truly repented of your sins? There is a huge difference between regret over your sins and repentance. Some people say, "Ooh, I'm sorry I did those things." Or "I'm sorry I got caught." True repentance does what Daniel says: You renounce your sin and change your behavior. Too bad, Nebuchadnezzar didn't listen to Nebuchadnezzar's advice, just like some of you will walk out of here today, thinking you can get away with your sin.

SCENE THREE: A DREAM REALIZED (28-33)

Verse 28. "All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, 'Is this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?' The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, 'This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you.'

I'm certain when Daniel said, "Repent!" the King considered it: After all, he was afraid. He had experienced this troubling dream and it had been interpreted to him. He probably thought, "You know, this preacher may be right. I may really be facing judgement. Should I repent?" Then apparently another part of him said, "Nah, you are so great and strong, this will never happen to you."

One month passed—no judgement. Six months passed... "I'm okay. Daniel was wrong." Eleven months passed... "Ha! Why did I ever worry? I'm invincible." One whole year passes... and then BAM! It happens.

Nebuchadnezzar is walking on the roof gazing at all he has done, and we see his main sin is pride. He is full of himself. What did he see when he looked down at the city of Babylon? He was probably gazing over the hanging gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, along with the Pyramids and the statue of Colossus at Rhodes. These were massive gardens he built for his wife Amytis. She came from Media where there were mountains and vegetation, so Nebuchadnezzar constructed an artificial mountain and planted gardens that hung down the side of this structure it made it appear these gardens were growing in air. An

ingenious system had been devised to hoist water over 300 feet from the Euphrates to water these gardens. "Look what I have done!"

He was walking on the roof of his palace. Babylonian records tell us he had three palaces in the city, greater than all of Sadaam Hussein's palaces. His main palace was 350 yards long and 200 yards wide (that's yards, not feet). Today, we think of a house as being palatial if it has 10,000 square feet. Nebuchadnezzar's main palace was 630,000 square feet. He thought. "Look what I have done!"

The City of Babylon was an architectural marvel. Records indicate two million people lived there, the largest city in the world. A wide ceremonial boulevard ran down the center of the city 1,000 yards long: That's ten football fields. A double-wall system encircled the main city. Its inner wall was 21 feet thick and reinforced with defense towers at 60-foot intervals. The outer wall was 38 feet high; 11 feet wide and also had watchtowers. Later, Nebuchadnezzar added another defensive double-wall system. It ran for 17 miles and was wide enough at the top for chariots to pass. He looked out at the city and said, "Look what I have done!"

From the roof of his palace this king gazed out upon all of this grandeur and his heart became filled with pride. He failed to give God the glory for his blessings. His heart was filled with self-importance. He began to boast of his own greatness and ability. Look at the first person pronouns in verse 30: "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and "for the glory of my majesty?"

The sin of pride is one of the toughest sins because a person can commit it and really not know it. You know when you steal. You know when you lie or commit adultery. But you can be guilty of pride and confuse it with "feeling good about yourself" or "having a positive self-image." Pride is when you start thinking every good thing in your life is a result of who you are and what you have done. It removes God from the equation. That's why the Bible says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5)

It's a dangerous thing to walk along the roof of your personal kingdom and start thinking about how great you are. Remember King David got in trouble when he was walking along his palace roof and saw Bathsheba bathing. When you think you are on top of the world and you have everything under control, you are the ruler of your own little kingdom, watch out, because it says in Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction; and a haughty spirit before a fall."

Look at verse 33. "Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird." He was changed in an instant from a beauty to a beast. If you think this is strange, there is a documented psychological phenomenon called Lycanthropy. It comes from the Greek word for "wolf," *lycos* and the word for "man," *anthropos*. Lycanthropy is a form of insanity where a person is convinced he is an animal. "Lycanthropy" literally means "wolf man." It originally referred to a person's belief he was a wolf-like creature. In fact, the primitive werewolf superstition was inspired by this condition. But today, lycanthropy has come to be a general name used regardless of the type of animal the person thinks he is. In one modern study a man

who believed himself to be a cat for a period of over thirteen years was gainfully employed . I guess his job was to be lazy and catch mice!

It's like the joke I heard about a man who went to a psychiatrist and said, "Doc, my wife thinks she's a chicken." The doctor said, "Well, bring her in, I can fix that." The man said, "Well, I don't know if I want her fixed; we really need the eggs." So Nebuchadnezzar is the first documented case of a wolf man or a werewolf.

I still think the old black and white horror movies were the best. I can still remember seeing Lon Chaney play the werewolf. A look would come over his face and he's start growing hair and claws and right before your eyes he would change into an animal. I mean, I'd get to shaking so hard I'd spill my popcorn and shove my Sugar Daddy up my nose.

Can you imagine not cutting your fingernails or toenails for seven years? I can't help but think of the recluse millionaire, Howard Hughes. My parents lived in Freeport, GBI from 1972 through 1976. They lived just down the street from the Xanadu Resort where Howard Hughes had rented the top five floors. He lived there in isolation, afraid of germs, never cutting his hair or his fingernails or toenails, a wealthy man—but miserable. My mother used to say she would go walking on the beach in front of the Xanadu looking for footprints that had the strange imprint of five-inch toenails. She never found any! Try to imagine the transformation that took place, as Nebuchadnezzar, the beautiful, becomes a beast! He could no longer live with people. Nebuchadnezzar lived outside in the fields with grazing animals. His diet probably was not just grass because this word also refers to vegetables and other herbs. At night Nebuchadnezzar wouldn't come inside. He stayed in the open field, exposed to the elements of nature. So, in the mornings he would be "drenched with the dew from heaven." His hair became matted and coarse, and looked like eagle feathers. His fingernails and toenails, never cut, became like claws. God didn't perform some hocus-pocus to turn Nebuchadnezzar into a beast. God simply removed the constraints from his heart and Nebuchadnezzar's true beastly nature manifested itself. All you have to do is look around at some of the crimes committed today and you will admit that most of us, if not all of us have a monster living within; a beast that wants to feed on our inherent sinful nature. Jeremiah 17:9 really is true "The heart is deceitful above all things, desperately wicked—who can know it?"

From beauty to beast. This represents a life out of control. It is so out of control he can't even address the basic rules of personal hygiene and diet. Has that happened to you? Not lycanthropy, but you look in the mirror and you wonder, "What's happened to me? My life is out of control." You might look just as pretty or as handsome as ever on the outside. But you're not as pretty on the inside as you thought you were. Some hateful, angry, and bitter things come out of your mouth. Some sinful, ugly, and depraved behavior is a part of your life. You don't like what you see because it's beastly. You have this sense that it's God who is exposing the beast within you. It's affecting your marriage, your friendships, your service in the church, your career, your schooling. Life isn't working as well for you like it used to. You look in the mirror and you don't see beauty, you see a beast.

For seven full years Nebuchadnezzar lived as a wolfman. But remember the dream? The tree was cut down, but the stump and roots remained. Now let's see what God can do for a person who lives like a beast.

EPILOGUE: A CHANGED MAN! (34-37)

Remember this is Nebuchadnezzar's personal testimony. Look at verse 34. "At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever." Compare this next verse to the "old" Nebuchadnezzar who said, "Look what I have done." "His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does what He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him, 'What have you done?'"

Skip down to verse 37. Let's see what Nebuchadnezzar had learned. "Now, I, Neb, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right all his ways are just." Here it comes. It took him seven years in God's University of Affliction. "And those who walk in pride he is able to humble."

A couple of weeks ago, a well-known man in Tyler who doesn't attend our church said to me. "You must be really proud of everything that is going on at Green Acres." I knew he meant well and it was a compliment, but I had already been digging into Daniel chapter 4 so I quickly replied, "I can't say that I'm proud. I am in awe. I am humbled by all God is doing in our church."

We must hate the sin of pride because Daniel 4 shows us what can happen when we are so enamored with ourselves that we think God's universe revolves around us. Nebuchadnezzar learned God is able to humble those who walk in pride.

I like the end of this chapter. After seven years of living like a beast, "Sadaam Hussein" of the ancient world lifts his eyes to God and surrenders to Him. This last section is written by a changed man, a man who has entered into a personal relationship with the God of the Universe. History tells us Nebuchadnezzar died soon after this experience. And I believe that based on his personal testimony, he is in heaven and we will see him one day. Only God can change a birdman into a believer. Only God can change a savage into a saint. Only God can change a wolfman into a witness.

Now what can we learn from this amazing story? As we finish, let's look at six

Lessons to Learn from the Birdman of Babylon

1. Worldly success never satisfies

Nebuchadnezzar "had it all" but he still couldn't get a good night's sleep. Now Nebuchadnezzar was fat and happy. He was on the top of the world; he ruled the known world at the time. But he didn't have peace when he lay down in his bed each night. As long as he could fill his waking

hours with activities to occupy his mind, he was okay, but when he was all alone in his royal chamber, snuggled under the royal covers of the royal bed, he knew something was wrong, and he kept having a troubling dream.

There are a lot of you here today who can relate to that. Outwardly you are “prosperous and contented.” But there is a huge, aching hole in the center of your heart. Something is missing. And as long as you can stay busy during the day, you don’t notice it, but during those wee hours of the morning, when sleep won’t come, you realize there is something missing. The same God who changed Nebuchadnezzar is after you, too.

Sometimes we think the only people who need Jesus are the down and out, those who are poor and helpless and hungry, and yes, they need Jesus. But there are people in East Texas who, like Nebuchadnezzar, are up and out. You’ve got money in the bank, and plenty of toys to keep you busy—but you need Jesus, too.

A lot of men and women are reaching their fifties after “climbing the ladder of success” only to find it is leaning against the wrong building. Bob Buford wrote his book *Half Time* to address this phenomenon. Most Americans spend the first half of their career working their fingers to the bone to find success, only to find they aren’t happy. A lot of tired people drag their injured egos into the locker room of introspection and discover they want to spend the second half searching for significance, not success. Please note that true significance is found only in Jesus Christ.

2. God employs a variety of methods to get your attention

God used a dream to irritate Nebuchadnezzar. He sent his prophet Daniel to get his attention. Finally God had to knock Nebuchadnezzar to rock bottom to get his attention.

Is God trying to tell you something today? He may be using Daniel 4 to get your attention. He may be using this preacher to get your attention. I hope you are smarter than Nebuchadnezzar, don’t wait until you are at rock bottom to listen.

Back when the telegraph was the fastest method of long-distance communication, a young man applied for a job as a Morse code operator. Answering an ad in the newspaper, he went to the office address that was listed. When he arrived, he entered a large, busy office filled with noise and clatter, including the sound of the telegraph in the background.

A sign on the receptionist’s counter instructed job applicants to fill out a form and wait until they were summoned to enter the inner office. The young man filled out his form and sat down with the seven other applicants in the waiting area.

After a few minutes, the young man stood up, crossed the room to the door of the inner office, and walked right in. Naturally the other applicants perked up, wondering what was going on. They muttered among themselves that they hadn’t heard any summons yet. They assumed the young man who went into the office made a mistake and would be disqualified.

Within a few minutes, however, the employer escorted the young man out of the office and said to the other applicants, "Gentlemen, thank you very much for coming, but the job has just been filled." The other applicants began grumbling to each other, and one spoke up saying, "Wait a minute, I don't understand. He was the last to come in, and we never even got a chance to be interviewed. Yet he got the job. That's not fair!"

The employer said, "I'm sorry, but the last several minutes while you've been sitting here, the telegraph has been ticking out the following message in Morse Code, 'If you understand this message, then come right in. The job is yours.' None of you heard it or understood it. This young man did. The job is his."

We live in a world full of busyness and clatter, like that office. People are distracted and unable to hear the still, small voice of God as He speaks in creation, in the Scriptures, or in the life and work of Jesus Christ. Are you tuned in to God's voice?

God is speaking right now. Some of you are listening, but many of you are so distracted by the cares of this world that you are "tuned in" to His voice.

3. God always warns—and allows repentance—before He acts

Before you are quick to criticize God for turning Nebuchadnezzar into a wild animal, remember God warned him with a dream. Then he sent his messenger Daniel, and Daniel told him to "repent!" There is a road to hell, and most people are traveling down that road, but all along the road of life God has placed plenty of warning signs. Every sermon is a warning judgement is coming. But you can repent. Every cemetery and obituary is a warning death is coming, but you still have time to repent.

Nebuchadnezzar had probably been warned before, but nothing had happened. Little did he know when Daniel stood there and said, "Renounce your sins and start living right," it was to be his last warning before God's judgement fell.

If you are reading this, chances are you've been warned before. Could it be this is God's last warning for you? One of these days, you will hear your last sermon—is this it? One of these days you will read your last verse of scripture—is it today?

4. God's promises are often slow, but they are sure

A full year passed after Nebuchadnezzar was warned. Why do you think God waited an entire year? The answer is found in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise—as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Some of you may be like Nebuchadnezzar, you hear a sermon about repentance and you get a little bothered and think, "You know, I really need to repent." But then when a week or a month passes, and everything seems to be "okay" in your life, you say, "Nah, everything is okay." A year may pass, forty years may pass, seventy years may pass, and everything is fine. Just

remember "The wages of sin is death." It may be slow but it is sure. "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." It may seem simple, but it is sure.

5. When you look to God, He will restore you

Nebuchadnezzar's problem was pride. As long as he was looking down at all he had accomplished he was in trouble. Then for seven years he walked around on all fours. He had no choice; he had to look down. But our God really is the God of the second, third, and fourth chances. Finally Nebuchadnezzar looks in the right direction, he looks up, and he lifts his eyes to God.

The Psalmist says in Psalm 121:1-2 "I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord—the maker of heaven and earth." Notice the order.

Nebuchadnezzar said, "I raised my eyes toward heaven and my sanity returned." If some of you are struggling with the beast within you, and you are fighting for keep a grip, the only way your sanity will return is for you to lift up your eyes to God. Quit looking at your problems. Lift up your eyes to the Problem Solver. Quit looking at your affliction and lift up your eyes to the Answer! Quit looking at your suffering and lift up your eyes to the Savior. That's what old Nebuchadnezzar did. He looked up and saw God. He acknowledged God's power, and this is what He said, "Everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride, he is able to humble." (vs. 37)

6. If God has changed you, share your testimony!

Like Nebuchadnezzar, you ought to write out your testimony. You can read Nebuchadnezzar's testimony out loud in less than six minutes. That's a good rule of thumb. Your testimony should be short and to the point. Here are the four steps in writing your personal testimony:

a. My life before Christ

You might not have been a Nebuchadnezzar, but you were a self-centered sinner.

b. How God got my attention

Was it a dream, or a sermon, or a passage of scripture? Perhaps your parents or some friend was used by God to get your attention. Or it might have been some personal tragedy or circumstance God used.

c. How and when He changed me

This week I buried Ben Valek. In his Bible I found these words written: "Born Jan. 16, 1938. Born again, September, 1953, San Diego, CA, USN Naval base." Above these two entries he had written. "If you're born twice, you'll only die once."

Folks can you point to a time and place where you gave your heart to Jesus? If I asked you when and where you were born physically, all of you could give me an answer. Let me ask you, where and when were you born again?

d. My life since Jesus took control

Nebuchadnezzar was a changed man, no question about it. Has there ever been a time when Jesus changed your life? How is your life different? The testimony of every Christian ought to be the words to that great hymn: "What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought since Jesus came into my heart/There is light in my soul for which long I had sought since Jesus came into my heart."

CONCLUSION

On the night of April 14, 1912, the mighty unsinkable Titanic was surging across a calm sea at a fast speed. We all know she sank after glancing off an iceberg. Records indicate earlier that night, warning after warning had been sent to tell them they were heading toward disaster, but the messages were ignored! In fact, when a nearby ship sent an urgent message warning them they were compromising their safety going into an ice field, the radio operators on the Titanic were talking to Cape Race about the time chauffeurs were to meet arriving passengers at the dock, and what menus were to be ready. Preoccupied with trivia, the Titanic radiomen responded to the warning by this message: "Shut up! I am talking to Cape Race, you are jamming my signals!" They worshipped their own glory and ignored the warnings-destruction followed!

Some things are too important to ignore. Are you listening to God's warning today? If you are here without Jesus; how many warnings to repent do you think you have left? I don't know, and you don't know either. Thank God Nebuchadnezzar responded to God's hand in his life and allowed God to change his heart. The beautiful hanging gardens are only a memory we can read about. They're gone. The amazing city of Babylon is now buried under the sands of Iraq. But it's interesting the only thing Nebuchadnezzar produced that remains today is his personal testimony found in Daniel 4. 2,600 years later, God is still using it to draw people to himself. The only thing that will stand the test of time in your life is your testimony of how Jesus has changed your life.

The good news is that God not only has the power to turn a self-centered beauty into the beast that they really are. He can also turn a beast of a sinner into a beauty of a saint.

OUTLINE

SCENE ONE: A DREAM RECEIVED (4-18)

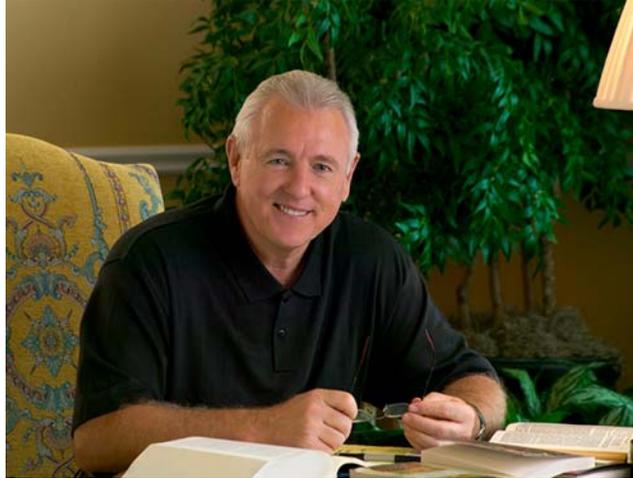
SCENE TWO: A DREAM REVEALED (19-27)

SCENE THREE: A DREAM REALIZED (28-33)

EPILOGUE: A CHANGED MAN! (34-37)

PERSONAL LESSONS FROM THE BIRDMAN OF BABYLON:

1. Worldly success never satisfies
2. God employs a variety of methods to get your attention
3. God always warns and allows repentance before He acts
4. God's promises are often slow, but they are sure
5. When you look to God, He will restore you
6. If God has changed you, share your testimony!
 - a. My life before Christ
 - b. How God got my attention
 - c. How and when He changed me
 - d. My life since Jesus took control



DISCLAIMER: These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. There is no legal copyright on this material. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material to stimulate your own Spirit-driven imagination. Additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners. You have my full permission to use any of this material as long as you cite the source for any substantial amount used in your message.

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes