

DANIEL: Life in the Present; Hope for Our Future

Chapter 4 (Daniel Ch. 4; Jeremiah 9:23-24)

Last words – My grandparents = “Always leave a good taste in someone’s mouth” (you look good; I’ve missed you; have you lost weight? You make me want to be a better man)

- In Chapter four of Daniel, we get to read the Last words of King Nebuchadnezzar – and they are a blessing
- Daniel Chapter 4 is so Unique: Written in Chaldean (Spoken Akkadian)
- It is the very written testimony of King Nebuchadnezzar – a first-hand account of his story.
- It is the last written record of the King. The last thing we know about him.
- The theme, again, displays the Sovereignty of God (i.e. God is control of all things)
- In this passage, God is demonstrating the Biblical truth in Prov. 16:18 -that “Pride comes before the fall.”

What does it mean for God to be sovereign? To have providence over all things?

READ Daniel Chapter 4:

Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* language that live in all the earth: “**May your peace abound!**”² It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me. **WHAT?? This is a public declaration to the earth:**

³ “How great are His signs And how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom And His dominion is from generation to generation.

The Vision of a Great Tree:

⁴ “I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace. ⁵ I saw a **dream** and it made me fearful; and *these fantasies as I lay* on my bed and the **visions** in my mind kept alarming me. ⁶ So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. ⁷ Then the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me. ⁸ But finally Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and I related the dream to him, *saying*, ⁹ ‘O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell me the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation.

¹⁰ ‘Now *these were* the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed: I was looking, and behold, *there was* a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great. = **A Great Tree covering earth. Angel told them to chop it down**

WHY? Vs. 17: “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 [=us] That the Most High is SOVEREIGN/ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men.” = sovereignty of God.

- Psalm 75 “For not from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the desert comes exaltation; But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another.”
- Job 5:11 “So that He sets on high those who are lowly, And those who mourn are lifted to safety.”
- **God is sovereign.** He raises up kings & He puts them down. (Joseph Gen 50; David 1Sam 2:7-8; Jesus Lk 1:52)

¹⁹ “Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. = Daniel was [lit. “like stone for an hour” = perplexed for the moment = “Appalled” - he knew this was a serious warning and impending judgment on the king.

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!

- **NOTICE: Daniel was compelled to “speak the truth in Love”** Eph. 4:15
- **Have you ever had to tell someone really bad news? Especially about them – You have cancer;**

²⁰ The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth ²¹ 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— ²² it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your ²³ majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth. ²³ 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 ²⁴ 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 ²⁵ him share with the beasts of the field until seven ²⁶ periods of time pass over him,” ²⁴ this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: ²⁵ 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 ²⁶ 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. ²⁶ And in that it was commanded to leave the stump ²⁷ with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be ²⁸ assured to you after you recognize that *it is Heaven that rules*.

²⁷ Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: ²⁸ 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.’

- **Notice: Daniel uses the opportunity to appeal to the king to repent, and trust in God, and beg for forgiveness that God may pardon his sin and relinquish from sure judgment.**
- **Who have you given a warning to – that someone didn’t heed your careful, loving warning? - “Four on the floor” - “Don’t run by the pool” - “Don’t pull the dog’s tail”**

²⁸ “All *this* happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. ²⁹ Twelve months later he was walking on the *roof* of the royal palace of Babylon. ³⁰ The king ³¹ reflected and said, ‘Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal ³² residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?’ The hanging gardens of Babylon - one of the seven wonders of the ancient world

In pride, Nebuchadnezzar was concerned with building an empire to glorify himself, a palace to show off his wealth and power, a place of comfort and ease - demonstrating his conquests of all nations - King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to build a monument to himself- as the highest, most powerful ruler on earth. **Don’t YOU too? What are YOU building on the earth – for your own glory, and prowess, and your own blessing**

³¹ While the word *was* in the king’s mouth, a voice ³² came from heaven, *saying*, ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: ³³ sovereignty has been removed from you, ³⁴ 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 ³⁵ 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.’ ³³ 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*.

³⁴ “But at the end of ³⁵ that period [7 years] I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven [prayer? Repentance?] and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever;

- **Did Nebuchadnezzar truly repent? Did he have enough? Read how responds after 7 years of being humbled? From being the most powerful man on earth to a helpless, insane, beast of the earth -**

For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom *endures* from generation to generation.

³⁵ “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven
And *among* the inhabitants of earth;
And no one can ³⁶ ward off His hand
Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’

What is the king's message about God? GOD IS SOVEREIGN over everything, including your life.

The King asks: Will YOU repent and relinquish your feigning, your assumption that you are in "control?"

³⁶ At that time my ^(a)reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were ^(a)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 ^(a)sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are ^(a)true and His ways ^(a)just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

The lesson is clear: Surrender to God NOW; don't wait for Him to have to humble you.

****The right response to the Sovereignty of God is WORSHIP! Your life should look different b/c of God.**

- All along, we have assumed this has been a story about Daniel; maybe we have missed something. **This is also the story of Nebuchadnezzar** – the unlikely king who finally repents of sin and praises God!!
- We should end, where Nebuchadnezzar begins, vs 1-3, **that when God has changed your life - you want EVERYONE to know.** He sent this declaration to ALL peoples under his reign
- **Vs. 1: Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every^(a) language that live in all the earth: "May your ^(a)peace abound! ² It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me**
- Nebuchadnezzar - begins the declaration with the **word peace.** - he finally yielded to God what Daniel warned and encouraged him to do - relinquish his cruelty and domineering over others - which may well have led to his own downfall and eventual conquering by the Persian Empire.
- Remarkable story of **Self-exaltation. Humiliation. Restoration.** The most powerful king in his day, reduced to an animal. His pride was revealed and rebuked. And God restored it all back – for His glory.We are STILL talking about it today!!

What does it mean for God to be sovereign? To have providence over all things?

APPLICATION:

- Think about Daniel's experience having prayed for, witnessed to, and encouraged Nebuchadnezzar to trust in the One True God. How satisfying it must have been for Daniel to see the fruit of his prayers and effort for Nebuchadnezzar's soul. **Who are you praying for? Witnessing to? Loving to Christ?**

Is God sovereign over your heart? Have you recognized this?

- Have you relinquished your "control" back to God?

Jeremiah 9:23-24 *"Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord."*

- Positively, **What can you boast in the Lord about in your life?** What has God done in your life? What has been the story of your life that God has pursued your heart, to show you Himself, to lead you to Him, to conquer your heart and sin – that you might repent and have eternal life??
- Negatively, **What pride is in your life right now?** What is in your life that is blocking your obedience?
- What does God want you to relinquish? (Pride/selfishness are synonymous = words like my "rights," "I am owed," "I deserve," "this is mine," "look what I have accomplished" – **God wants to replace what is "YOURS" with ALL of HIM!**

1 Cor. 4:7 *"What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?"*

