

God's Gonna Cut You Down

Daniel 4

INTRODUCTION: We are in a series through the OT book of Daniel. I was approached by a fellow Pastor, and African American last week asking why I wasn't doing a series that addressed the racial and cultural issues of our day. In his own words he said, "No people have been through what my people have been through."

- Taken from their country, to a foreign land?
- Enslaved?
- Their manhood Emasculated?
- Their names changed so that every time they looked at their drivers license they saw the name given to them by their slave masters?
- Has there ever been a people to endure such treatment?

Turn if you would to the book of Daniel.

C.S. Lewis said, *"That which is not eternal is eternally out of date"*.

The word of God is sharper than any two edged sword - ***it doesn't catch up to culture, culture catches up to it.***

We have seen so far - Israel overtaken by Babylon. Their best and their brightest taken away to a foreign land. Emasculated upon arrival and assigned a place among the Eunuchs. Names given to the in keeping with the Demonic Idols of the land.

The book of Daniel began while these young men were teens. By chapter 4, Daniel is about my age, somewhere in his 40's.

TEXT: Daniel 4:1-5:31 (ESV)

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! ² It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. ³ How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

The story that follows is the testimony of Nebuchadnezzar, this is his conversion experience. Everyone has a story, everyone has a biography, not every has a testimony. Nebuchadnezzar has a testimony.

Notice that it begins with...

1. The Problem of Pride

⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was **at ease** in my house **and prospering** in my palace.

Here was a man far from God, at ease and prospering. Consider the revelation that he had already been given.

In a dream - God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that his Kingdom would fall. It would not fall to a greater Kingdom, but to a lesser, inferior Kingdom. The dream revealed history as a series of metals, each lesser quality than the one before. It is the Devolution of the Species.

Rather than hear the Word of God and believe, Nebuchadnezzar rebelled - he built a 90ft tall statue all of pure gold. As if to say, I will not only be the head - but mine shall be an everlasting Kingdom, and the one who does not BOW DOWN to my plan will be cast into a furnace of my wrath.

BOW DOWN - to my WORD, BOW DOWN - to my Agenda. Well there was no **Drew Brees** among the Hebrew children. They said, "there is but one name to which we will bow, and it's not Nebuchadnezzar". So they suffered the wrath of the world - they are thrown into a fiery furnace. But then behold, one like unto the Son of God stood there in their midst.

Now, you shown me a man whom fire doesn't burn, neither does the smoke of the fire smell on his garment... I want to know something about that man's God.

But Nebuchadnezzar does not tremble before the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In his own words - [4](#) I, Nebuchadnezzar, was **at ease** in my house **and prospering** in my palace.

When the King should have been in fear of another fiery furnace, kindled by the wrath of another King. He was AT EASE and PROSPERING.

There is something about PRIDE that can make us at ease... when we ought to stand to attention.

You say, "well Pastor, I'm no King, I'm no Nebuchadnezzar". Well **Vance Havner** had it right when he said, "*When the tide is low, every shrimp has his own puddle.*"

You don't rule THE world, but perhaps you rule YOUR world. Perhaps you are the King Shrimp of your own private puddle.

Perhaps like the Rich Man Jesus told of in **Luke 12:16-20 (ESV)**

[17](#) ...he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' [18](#) And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. [19](#) And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." ' [20](#) But God said to him,

'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'

There is something about PRIDE that can make us at ease... when we ought to stand to attention.

⁵ I saw a dream that made me **afraid**. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head **alarmed** me.

How many of you know that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom?

Just as in chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. Just as before, he knew this was no ordinary dream, it was revelatory. So just as before he summoned the wise men of Babylon, and Daniel came among them, and gave the Dream and its interpretation.

⁸ At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream, saying, ⁹ “O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. ¹² Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

¹³ “I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. ¹⁴ He 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 the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, 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.** ¹⁶ Let his mind be changed from a man’s, and let a beast’s mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. ¹⁷ The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.’

Now Nebuchadnezzar was accustomed to giving decrees, but now he is given one.

¹⁸ 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, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you.” ¹⁹ Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, “Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the

interpretation alarm you.” Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies!²⁰ 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,²¹ whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived—²² **it is you, O king,**

Like Nathan before him - the Prophet of God points his boney finger at the King and says, “Thou art the man”.

Notice not only the Problem of Pride, but secondly

2. The Pressure of Grace

Daniel interprets the dream precisely. Then in verse 27 he gives an old fashion alter call.

²⁷ Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: **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.”

- Now who were the oppressed in Daniel chapter 4? The Jews... the people of God.
- Who are the people of God in day? The Church. Is the church ever oppressed by godless rulers?

Do we riot in the streets and commit crimes when we are treated unjustly? No - we call up a higher authority. One who is able to see beyond the smoke screen of culture.

LISTEN Carefully - **Shelby Steel** said it best, *“Racism is as common as stupidity. And like stupidity there will always be a twinge of it to resist”.*

If you harm your fellow man, or act unjustly toward your fellow man because of the color of his skin, I call you to repent.

But I also ask you to be wise and recognize that while those with just complaints that we should stand arm and arm with, there are also those who would hijack a movement by wicked means and leverage it for political power. Do not think it accidental that Black Lives Matter a little more to some on election years.

²⁸ All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.²⁹ At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon,³⁰ and the king answered and said, “Is not this great Babylon, **which I have built by my mighty power** as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?”

Let me tell you a simple test to see if you are motivated by PRIDE. **Count the personal pronouns.**

Isaiah 14:13-14 tells of Satan's 5 I will statements

¹³“But you said in your heart,

- ‘I will ascend to heaven;
- I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
- And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north.
- ¹⁴‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
- I will make myself like the Most High.

In the same way - **Nebuchadnezzar** under Satanic influence says, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?”

³¹ While the words were still in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, ³² and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts 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 that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.” ³³ Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles’ feathers, and his nails were like birds’ claws.

Oh how the mighty have fallen - I am reminded of that first great city of Babel. Where MAN builds a tower into the Heavens and the text says, “God stooped down to see the little tower man had built”.

Friend - even if you have your own puddle, you are still a shrimp in God’s eyes.

In a moment, all of the things that got you to where you are today, can be taken.

1 Corinthians 4:7 (ESV)

⁷...What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

Now is this a hard, mean thing God has done to Nebuchadnezzar? NO! This is the terrible hand of grace.

This cruelty is like that of a surgeon that will lance the tumor, to remove the cancer.

ILLUSTRATION: I remember when I was a student Pastor, a young lady was caught in her sin. She was devastated, embarrassed, she felt like a spectacle because everyone in that small town knew what she had done. I remember telling her, “If you had not of

been caught you would have continued in your sin... there will be a day when you will look back at this terribly difficult moment and say to yourself, second only to the death of Jesus, that was the most kind thing God ever did to me, exposing my sin.

Hebrews 12:5–6 (ESV)

⁵...“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

Well we have seen the Problem of Pride, the Pressure of Grace...

3. The Power of Repentance

³⁴ At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven,

The antidote for pride is not pursuing humility it's pursuing God.

It's not trying to think of yourself less, it's setting your thoughts on things above.

34b. 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; 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?” ³⁶ At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me.

³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Who will be able to Make America Great Again?

The Who who will bless the Most High and praise and honor Him who lives forever. The one who will say 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, 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?”

When a leader can walk onto the floor of the Senate, or the Oval Office and say those words our nation will experience greatness like we've never even imagined.

We may never see that fully at the WHITE HOUSE, we may never see that fully at the SCHOOL HOUSE, We may never see that fully at the COURT HOUSE... but may every man and woman under the sound of my voice say, "As for me and MY HOUSE"... we will serve the Lord.

The day is coming folks - a day when the Government will be on HIS shoulders. Daniel is a marvelous book - it is not mean to push you LEFT or RIGHT, but to push you up.