

OUR GOD REIGNS – p. 5
“For God So Loved Nebuchadnezzar”
Daniel 4

God’s Glory on Display

I love the book of Daniel because in every story the glory of God is on display!

-And it is on display for all the nations to see –

-Remember that chapters 2-7 are written in Aramaic – the trade language of the day.

So, the glory of God is on display in all these stories –

-In chapter 2 – God Reveals – Displays the glory of His wisdom

-In chapter 3 – God Rescues – Displays the glory of His power

-In chapter 4 – God Rules – Displays the glory of His sovereignty

There’s three main messages of chapter 4 –

-One – God will judge human pride

-Look at the last verse – v. 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.”*

-It is a warning to any of us who are living in pride.

-Two – God is sovereign and He righteously reigns over all things

-Nebuchadnezzar knows that he is the king of Babylon but God is the king of Heaven!

-Three – For God So Loved Nebuchadnezzar!

-God had every right and would be perfectly just to judge this proud, pagan man.

-But God so loved Nebuchadnezzar!

-He becomes a trophy of God’s mercy for the ages...

A Testimony of Conversion

Chapter 4 is the testimony of Nebuchadnezzar’s conversion to being a worshipper of the God of Israel.

-v. 2 – *“It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.”*

-This is a personal testimony! It is personal because of what he says *“what God has done for me”!*

-v. 1 – *“King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth...”*

-He is getting the word out which is what a testimony is all about.

-And he will be clear in this personal testimony that the God of Israel did a work in his life that has made him a true worshipper of God.

Approximate timeline of events –

-The events that led to his conversion take place about 30-35 years into his reign.

-Probably about 25 years after the “burning fiery furnace” incident of chapter 3.

-Daniel is approximately 50 years old at the time of the events of chapter 4.

Nebuchadnezzar had several encounters with God –

-Chapter 1 he saw the benefit of God

-Chapter 2 he experienced a display of God’s wisdom and said –

-*“Your God Daniel is the best of the gods...!”*

-Chapter 3 he was blown away by God’s power –

-And he decreed that no one could speak against the God of Israel...

But, while he had come close to God, he wasn’t a personal believer until the events he describes in his testimony of chapter 4 –

A Good Testimony

1 – What do you believe?

-What did Nebuchadnezzar believe? – vs. 1-3

-He believed God has revealed Himself through *“signs and wonders”* (v. 2)

- There are 13 OT references to “signs and wonders” – all of which are works God did for His people to produce faith in their God.
- So when he says, v. 2, - *“It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.”* – He is saying, “This is how God produced faith in me”!
- Here is King Nebuchadnezzar’s statement of faith, v. 3, *“How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.”*
- This is a radical conversion for a man, who in the previous chapter, wanted to be worshipped!
- Now he believes there is One Eternal God and One Eternal Kingdom!

2 – How did you come to believe it?

- The bulk of the chapter is Nebuchadnezzar’s story – How did God convert him?
- Another Troubling Dream – vs. 4-18
 - The danger of prosperity – v. 4
 - v. 4 – *“I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace.”*
 - This is where King Nebuchadnezzar was – His ease and prosperity resulted in greater pride and self-promotion.
 - Again, like chapter 2, the king has a troubling dream that makes him “afraid”, v. 5 –
 - But his main problem is that he goes back to his old, worn out and worthless Babylonian playbook – “Call the magicians!”
 - Again, like chapter 2, Daniel rises to the top and will, with God’s enabling, interpret the dream.
 - Read verses 10-12
 - The dream expresses the greatness of his kingdom –
 - It was massive (reached to heaven and was seen by all the earth)
 - It was beautiful and glorious –
 - Two of the “7 Wonders of the Ancient World” were created by Nebuchadnezzar.
 - One was the wall around his city and the other was his hanging gardens...It was like the Garden of Eden in the middle of the desert!
 - It was productive (provided shelter, food and protection)
 - But this echoes ahead to something Jesus would say, *“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit or lose his soul?”* (Matt. 16:26; Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25)
 - How the great have fallen!
 - Read verses 13-16
 - His kingdom is “chopped down” and he himself will live like a beast!
 - He will lose his mind!
 - But notice the number “7” in verse 16b – “...and let seven periods of time pass over him.”
 - Seven is the number for completeness like the Seven Days of Creation.
- Daniel Interprets the dream – vs. 19-27
 - Daniel was God’s gift to Nebuchadnezzar!
 - God puts the right people in the right place at the right time...
 - Daniel has compassion on the king and is reluctant to tell him the severity of God’s discipline.
 - We see God’s mercy which is a ray of hope, v. 23 – *“Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump and its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field.”*
 - It will grow back!
 - God’s discipline is severe but it is a remedial discipline not merely penal. -v. 26
 - God even gives him opportunity to repent, vs.

3 – What difference has it made in your life?

- What difference did God’s work of self-deliverance make in the king’s life?