

Daniel 4 | Who is King?

Good morning church family! My name is Bobby, and I am so glad you are in the building today.

It's a great day to have a great day. How many of you have something in your life that you are grateful for?

We have thanksgiving coming up. Is that your favorite holiday?

If you haven't done it yet, let me encourage you to jump into The Loop. It's our 3-step process to become an official partner with our church. If you are ready to commit to this local body and make this your church home...Get in the Loop.

Step 1 is the first Sunday of every month. Dec 5 during the second service. Sign up today.

We are in the middle of walking through the book of Daniel. Daniel is giving us a first-hand account of what occurred when the Jews were overtaken by the Babylonians. They were taken to Babylon, and this is known as the Babylonian captivity for the Israelites.

This story took place about 2600 years ago. About 600 years before Jesus walked on the earth.

We see Daniel living out his life as a slave. As He is sharing his story, he often refers to the Babylonian King...Nebuchadnezzar. Pagan King. Bad, bad guy.

Today we are looking at chapter 4. We are going to look at several verses. I found out that I get paid by the verse...so we are going to hit many!!

King Neb has been doing whatever he wants for years and years. He looks at himself like a God.

Daniel 4 is him telling his story. He was gone for 7 years and he's filling us all in on where he has been and what happened. His press conference if you will.

Daniel 4.1-3 | King Nebuchadnezzar, To those of every people, nation, and language, who live on the whole earth: May your prosperity increase. ²I am pleased to tell you about the miracles and wonders the Most High God has done for me. ³How great are his miracles, and how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation. (CSB)

The theme or outline we see him talking about here...**Gods Kingdom Vs. Human empires**

Neb keeps talking about kingdom of God in comparison to his empire.

This is the point, We are all building something. (Family, business, ministry, finances, etc) It is either part of Gods kingdom or not. There is nothing wrong with building something as long as its apart of Gods kingdom.

Meaning, is it done according to Gods glory and design.

Neb built this amazing human empire but it wasn't a part of Gods kingdom and design so there was always conflict.

Maybe that's you today...you're building but there is just always conflict. Let me suggest to take a look at it from this angle...**Am I building my own empire?**

So this is what Neb was doing up to this point.

Daniel 4.4 I I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace.

He was at ease and flourishing in my palace...this dude had it all. Owned nations and people. Doesn't pay taxes. He had gold and soldiers. So much extra gold he made a statue of himself.

Daniel 4.5 I I had a dream, and it frightened me; while in my bed, the images and visions in my mind alarmed me.

Noone could get to him...except God. You cannot hide from God. You cannot avoid God. Nobody can get to Neb but God can.

Daniel 4.6-18 I ⁶ So I issued a decree to bring all the wise men of Babylon to me in order that they might make the dream's interpretation known to me.

(These are the same wise men we celebrate at Christmas. Bring the Gold back to its rightful place.)

⁷ When the magicians, mediums, Chaldeans, and diviners came in, I told them the dream, but they could not make its interpretation known to me. ⁸ Finally Daniel, named Belteshazzar after the name of my god—and a spirit of the holy gods is in him—came before me. I told him the dream:

(Three times in this chapter Neb recognizes that the Spirit of God is in him. He is filled with the Holy Spirit. Even in the midst of Babylon. That's what we all should be striving for. That people see something different in us.)

⁹ “Belteshazzar, head of the magicians, because I know that you have the spirit of the holy gods and that no mystery puzzles you, explain to me the visions of my

dream that I saw, and its interpretation. ¹⁰ In the visions of my mind as I was lying in bed, I saw this:

There was a tree in the middle of the earth, and it was very tall. ¹¹ The tree grew large and strong; its top reached to the sky, and it was visible to the ends of the earth. ¹² Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit was abundant, and on it was food for all. Wild animals found shelter under it, the birds of the sky lived in its branches, and every creature was fed from it. ¹³ “As I was lying in my bed, I also saw in the visions of my mind a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven.

(This is getting a little odd. Who’s the mailman with wings? It’s a divine being.)

¹⁴ He called out loudly: Cut down the tree and chop off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it, and the birds from its branches.

¹⁵ But leave the stump with its roots in the ground and with a band of iron and bronze around it in the tender grass of the field. Let him be drenched with dew from the sky and share the plants of the earth with the animals. ¹⁶ Let his mind be changed from that of a human and let him be given the mind of an animal for seven periods of time.

¹⁷ This word is by decree of the watchers, and the decision is by command from the holy ones. This is so that the living will know that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms. He gives them to anyone he wants and sets the lowliest of people over them. ¹⁸ This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because none of the wise men of my kingdom can make the interpretation known to me. But you can, because you have a spirit of the holy gods.”

(I got a revelation from God and only a man of God can help with it.)

God rules over rulers. He’s always in control.

What’s curious here, Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel; Nebuchadnezzar is free, Daniel is a slave. Nebuchadnezzar is probably the richest and most powerful man on the earth, Daniel owns nothing and has no power. Nebuchadnezzars got a harem, Daniel’s a single guy, right? They’re different. Yet, who’s the one that holds the power?

Daniel. Because he has the one thing that Nebuchadnezzar doesn’t have, the Spirit of God.

The most powerful thing you can have in your life is not a thing, it’s a person, named the Holy Spirit.

Everybody needs God. Powerless and powerful. Homeless and multi-homes.

Greater is He who lives in me than he who lives in the world.

What happens next is critical...God says, you can build a massive empire, but if it's not a part of my kingdom, it's going to get chopped down.

Daniel 4.19- I ¹⁹ Then Daniel, whose name is Belshazzar, was stunned for a moment, and his thoughts alarmed him.

(His thoughts alarmed him? Once he got the interpretation from God, he was troubled...why? Well he has faithfully served Neb for over 30 years. Daniel is a beautiful picture of loving your enemy. He was worried.

The king said, "Belshazzar, don't let the dream or its interpretation alarm you." Belshazzar answered, "My lord, may the dream apply to those who hate you, and its interpretation to your enemies!"

²⁰ The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, whose top reached to the sky and was visible to the whole earth, ²¹ and whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant—and on it was food for all, under it the wild animals lived, and in its branches the birds of the sky lived— ²² that tree is you, Your Majesty. For you have become great and strong: your greatness has grown and even reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to the ends of the earth.

(He's telling him...you won. Its all yours, it's all about you)

²³ "The king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump with its roots in the ground and with a band of iron and bronze around it in the tender grass of the field. Let him be drenched with dew from the sky and share food with the wild animals for seven periods of time.' ²⁴ This is the interpretation, Your Majesty, and this is the decree of the Most High that has been issued against my lord the king:

(He is telling Neb...you've spent you whole life giving decrees, now its m turn. Im the MOST HIGH God and you are not.

²⁵ You will be driven away from people to live with the wild animals. You will feed on grass like cattle and be drenched with dew from the sky for seven periods of time, until you acknowledge that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms, and he gives them to anyone he wants. ²⁶ As for the command to leave the tree's stump with its roots, your kingdom will be restored to you as soon as you acknowledge that Heaven rules. ²⁷ Therefore, may my advice seem good to you my king. Separate yourself from your sins by doing what is right, and from your injustices by showing mercy to the needy. Perhaps there will be an extension of your prosperity."

(Daniel is essentially telling him...You're a sinner, you need a Savior. Probably not the easiest message for old Nebby to hear.

God is trying to reveal to him...you're not the junk!

God has been pursuing him and chasing after Neb.

And here is what's even crazier. There are several times when Neb acknowledges who God is.

Daniel 2.47 I ⁴⁷ The king said to Daniel, “Your God is indeed God of gods, Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, since you were able to reveal this mystery.”

Daniel 3.28-29 I ²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, “Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel and rescued his servants who trusted in him. They violated the king’s command and risked their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I issue a decree that anyone of any people, nation, or language who says anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be torn limb from limb and his house made a garbage dump. For there is no other god who is able to deliver like this.”

He says don't be talking trash about God. He's the real deal. But yet something has kept him from surrendering to that God. It's the same for you and I today.

The number one reason we run from God...Pride.

God keeps showing up to NEB but he has not yet surrendered to God.

He's proud. He's self-made. He is about him. But God continues to pursue this pagan King. Unfortunately....the more God pursues, the more NEB resists. He gave God a shout out from time to time...

A passing acknowledgement is not a surrendered heart.

Apply this to every aspect of our journey...your prayer life. Your quiet time. Your church attendance. Your giving. Your serving.

Now Neb has a choice to make. Humility or humiliation?

Daniel 4.29-33 I ²⁹ At the end of twelve months, as he was walking on the roof of the royal palace in Babylon.

It's been a year since Daniel told him the dream. What's he going to choose?

³⁰ the king exclaimed, “Is this not Babylon the Great that I have built to be a royal residence by my vast power and for my majestic glory?”

I am awesome! Look what I have built here in Babylon. It's all about me. How does God respond?

³¹ While the words were still in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared that the kingdom has departed from you.

³² You will be driven away from people to live with the wild animals, and you will feed on grass like cattle for seven periods of time, until you acknowledge that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms, and he gives them to anyone he wants." ³³ At that moment the message against Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people. He ate grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with dew from the sky, until his hair grew like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

His pride led him from the palace to the pasture.

Where is your pride leading you? Who is on the throne in your life?

James 4.7 | God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

James 4.10 | Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Your job and my job are to humble yourself. Your job is not to humble your spouse, kids, neighbor.

Pride is the biggest obstacle to a surrendered life.

All must repent and acknowledge God. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess.

We see and gain an understanding of what pride can do...but I think there is a bigger message here.

God pursues us because He loves us.

Why does God keep pursuing this guy? He has turned his back, time and time again. But here is the crazy part...God keeps pursuing him.

Daniel 4.34-37 | ³⁴ But at the end of those days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven, and my sanity returned to me. Then I praised the Most High and honored and glorified him who lives forever: For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. ³⁵ All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and he does what he wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can block his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" ³⁶ At that time my sanity returned to me, and my majesty and splendor returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and my nobles sought me out, I was reestablished over my kingdom, and even more greatness came to me. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and glorify

the King of the heavens, because all his works are true, and his ways are just. He is able to humble those who walk in pride.

God is patient. God hears. God forgives. I'm grateful God keeps pursuing me.

Conclusion:

I pray that we would all experience the love, grace, and forgiveness like NEB did. Its good! It's better.

Is pride keeping you from surrender?

Have you truly given over full control of your life to God? Repent and acknowledged Him as Lord and Savior?

Take that step today.