

DANIEL: THRIVING IN A GODLESS CULTURE
V: God's Enforcing His Sovereignty Over Nebuchadnezzar
(Daniel 4:1-37)

I. Introduction

- A. As believers living in a spiritually decaying, godless culture, we need to live affirmatively in victory over sin.
- B. Daniel as a young man was taken captive by godless Babylonians, and he lived through Persia's conquest of Babylon, righteously and wisely serving the Lord in a godless culture as a great example for us.
- C. We view Daniel 4:1-37 on God's enforcing His sovereignty over Babylon's king for our edification:

II. God's Enforcing His Sovereignty Over Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 4:1-37.

- A. Daniel 4 is "a public decree or state paper of Nebuchadnezzar" that Daniel "was led by the Holy Spirit's inspiration to include" in his book, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Daniel 4:1; B. K. C., O. T., p. 1341.
- B. Nebuchadnezzar's proclamation then testified to God's enforcing His sovereignty over Nebuchadnezzar to teach him that God was sovereign opposite Nebuchadnezzar's false pride to the contrary, Daniel 4:1-37:
 - 1. This proclamation is introduced by a statement from Nebuchadnezzar as to how it glorified the Most High God in His revelations to him about God's everlasting kingdom and dominion, Daniel 4:1-3.
 - 2. To clarify, Nebuchadnezzar reported he had had a vision that troubled him, so he summoned all the wise men of Babylon to get them to interpret the dream and settle his troubled mind, Daniel 4:4-6.
 - 3. The wise men were unable to interpret the dream (Daniel 4:7) until Daniel arrived, and Nebuchadnezzar recalled how Daniel had a spirit of God in him Who explained difficult dreams (Daniel 4:8-9), so the king reported what he had dreamed to him, Daniel 4:10-17 as follows:
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed of a large tree in the midst of the earth that provided food for all and shade for the beasts of the field and nesting for the birds of the heavens, Daniel 4:10-12.
 - b. Then, an angelic messenger descended from heaven and cried out to hew down this great tree, cut off its branches, shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit so that the beasts of the field and birds of the air would abandon it, though leaving a stump with its roots and a band of iron and brass to preserve it while the mind of an animal was given to it for seven years, Daniel 4:13-16.
 - c. This was to occur that the living might know that the Most High God rules over mankind, and gives rulership to whomever He chooses, setting up over it the basest of men, Daniel 4:17.
 - 4. The king then directed Daniel to interpret the dream for him, Daniel 4:18.
 - 5. Daniel was astonished at the interpretation and was reluctant to share it with Nebuchadnezzar because it referred to a theological error in the king that God intended to address by way of punishment, Daniel 4:19.
 - 6. Nevertheless, he explained to Nebuchadnezzar the dream and gave him an admonishment, Daniel 4:20-27:
 - a. Daniel explained that the king was the great tree, signifying the greatness of his dominion, Dan. 4:20-22.
 - b. However, the message of the angel from heaven was a pronouncement of judgment by God on Nebuchadnezzar in which he would be driven from men and dwell with animals of the field and act like them until he realized that God was sovereign and was responsible for giving him his kingdom, 4:23-25.
 - c. Though the tree would be cut down in judgment, its stump would be preserved until the king realized that God was sovereign and that He and not Nebuchadnezzar had given the king his power, Daniel 4:26.
 - d. Daniel thus counseled Nebuchadnezzar to cease sinning and live righteously, to show mercy in humility to the poor that God might lengthen his tranquility and not punish him, Daniel 4:27.
 - 7. Nebuchadnezzar instead came to boast of his greatness, and while the boast was in his mouth, God's word came from heaven that his kingdom was departed from him, and Nebuchadnezzar was struck with the illness of boanthropy, imagining himself to be an animal, Daniel 4:28-32; *Ibid.*, Ryrie, fn. to Dan. 4:33.
 - 8. He was driven from his throne and lived like an animal for seven years until his reason returned to him and he praised the God of heaven for His sovereignty and grace toward him, Daniel 4:33-35.
 - 9. With the restoration of his reason, Nebuchadnezzar was restored to his kingdom and respected by his subordinates, so he praised and honored the Most High God of heaven, Daniel 4:36-37.

Lesson: *When king Nebuchadnezzar boasted of his greatness, God greatly humbled him until he realized that his majesty was a gift from God, and when he gave glory to God, the Lord restored Nebuchadnezzar to his throne.*

Application: *May we humble ourselves before the Lord relative to whatever position of influence and honor we have, for it all comes from Him, not from ourselves, and He alone is to be praised as the Sovereign God of history.*