

Be Teachable, the Most High is the Most High

Sunday, May 12, 2024 ▪ Ryan Wildauer

Submit yourself to God's _____. vv. 24-27

See _____ as an extension of God's grace. vv. 28-33

_____, _____ and _____ the Most High God. vv. 34-37

Daniel 4:19-37

^[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, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. ^[23] And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,' ^[24] this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, ^[25] that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. ^[26] And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules. ^[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."

^[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?" ^[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.

^[34] At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, 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. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: In today's world, how do we sometimes challenge or ignore God's authority? Why do you think we do that?

Read & Discuss: Daniel 4:19-37

1. What reason does Daniel give for why God will bring about the circumstances of this dream (v. 25)? Repeatedly in Daniel 4 God is referred to as the "Most High," how do you think Nebuchadnezzar might have felt about this title for God before he had experienced God's judgement? Given all his previous encounters with Daniel and his friends do you think of Nebuchadnezzar as God-fearing (cf 2 Kgs 24-25, 2 Chr 36)?
2. Given the interpretation of the dream, what solution does Daniel suggest to King Nebuchadnezzar (v. 27)? How does practicing righteousness and showing mercy demonstrate humility before God? What might motivate Daniel to make such a suggestion? What should motivate us in warning the world of God's coming judgment? Daniel points Nebuchadnezzar to the hope of an elongation of his prosperity. What should we point people to as the hope of new covenant believers?
3. Nebuchadnezzar doesn't mention God in speaking of his achievements (v. 30), in what ways do we tend to take credit for our success? Thinking about those areas, how can you recognize God's grace in those accomplishments? Why might it be difficult for genuine gratitude and pride to coexist?
4. According to verse 32, who ultimately grants and removes kingdoms? What does this say about God's sovereignty? How have you seen the theme of God's sovereignty in the book of Daniel so far? What other stories in God's word come to mind in illustrating God's sovereign control over circumstances and people?
5. Looking at verses 34 through 37, what attributes does Nebuchadnezzar now recognize in God? Why do you think it's important for Nebuchadnezzar to publicly declare his praise for God (v. 37)? Spend a few minutes defining the meaning and relationship between the words: bless, praise, honor, and extol which Nebuchadnezzar uses to describe his new response to God (vv. 34, 37).

Application: After reading this passage, what can we learn about pride and humility? How can we live in a way that acknowledges and submits to God's ultimate power?

Prayer: Praise God for his sovereign control over all the kingdoms of this earth. Ask him to help you interact with a broken world in ways that help them see the goodness of God and the beauty of the gospel of Jesus.