

Lesson 5 Daniel 4

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[0 : 0 0] I want us to just read through Daniel chapter 4, and then we'll kind of come back and look at a few things about the chapter. This shifts back again to another dream.

This is still the sort of historical section, if you will. The true vision section is coming. And so anyway, this is a great little chapter.

So I'll start reading. I may ask somebody to pinch it for me here in just a little bit. Daniel chapter 4, beginning in verse 1. King Nebuchadnezzar, to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied to you.

It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great are His signs! How mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion endures from generation to generation.

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed, the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me.

[1 : 1 1] So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream that they could not make known to me its interpretation.

At last, Daniel came in before me, he who was named Belshazzar, after the name of my God, and whom is the spirit of the holy gods. And I told him the dream, saying, O Belshazzar, 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 in their interpretation. 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.

The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. Its leaves were beautiful, and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all.

The beasts of the field found shade under it, the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it. I saw the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven.

[2 : 3 1] He proclaimed aloud, and said thus, Chop down the tree, and lop off its branches. Strip off the leaves, and scatter its fruit. Let the beast flee from under it, and the birds from its branches.

Believe the stump of its root 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 beast in the grass of the earth. 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.

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 wills, and sets over it the lowliest of men.

This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation.

[3 : 36] But you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you. Then Daniel, whose name was Belshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him.

The king answered and said, Belshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you. Belshazzar answered and said, My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you, and its interpretation for your enemies.

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, whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, and under which beasts of the field found shade, and whose branches the birds of the heavens lived.

It's you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to the heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. 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, this is the interpretation, O king.

It is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, that 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 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 you will.

[5 : 18] 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.

Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you. Break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquity by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.

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

And 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, 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.

Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar, and he was driven from among men, and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until his hair grew as long as eagle's feathers, and his nails were like bird's claws.

[6 : 49] 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.

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the hosts of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand or say to him, what have you done?

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.

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.

This is the word of the Lord. Well, so let's talk about this passage for a second, and just give me, just give me a brief summary, right?

[8 : 02] What's a brief summary of the story we just read? It's pretty simple, I think, but go for it. Just a summary. That's all we want. Okay, that's right.

So there we go. And how did we know this was going to happen? It was a dream. That's right. And the dream was interpreted, right? So, so let me, let me ask you to think about something.

One of the things about this, you'll notice, there's just a ton of repetition, and we're going to get into that repetition here in a moment. But I don't know about you, but sometimes repetition in the Bible is a little tiresome for us as Western people, because we think differently than the way they did.

There was a lot of oral culture back then, and so they had to repeat things. For that culture to kind of grasp and hold on to. But also, repetition serves as an emphasis point to help you kind of follow the big idea.

So there's been a lot of people who've put forward basic themes of this chapter saying, this is what this chapter's about. This is what this chapter's about. And let me give you just two of these, and we'll just kind of talk them through for a second.

[9 : 28] Some say that the point of the chapter is to teach the dangers of pride and that pride, being a sin, makes a man into an animal. Now, what do you think about that?

That's one aspect. Okay. It seems to be something to that little bit, doesn't there? Yeah? I mean, he obviously turns like an animal for a season.

What is the problem, though, with that theme that pride turns a man into an animal? Why not chapter 3?

When he built a statue to be worshipped. Why now? And did the pride turn him into an animal? What turned him into an animal?

God did. God did. Exactly. Exactly. So if you begin to look at this passage as though it's a moral story about the dangers of pride, then we've kind of missed the point just a little bit.

[10 : 53] It's something that is there. There is danger of pride, and pride is there, and we see God humbling him, but that is not really the key or the theme that helps tie all this together and help us to see the big picture.

Without seeing the big picture, we don't really know what this chapter is about. Okay, so another theme that some people will put on there, so since we said God is the one who turns him into an animal, they say, okay, this chapter, the theme of this chapter is about God's judgment upon pride.

Okay, so that seems a little bit closer to the truth, right? What do you think about that? Well, you're never supposed to think that you're the God or you're the king of everything, and that's just taking it a little bit too far.

Yeah, sure, sure. And it caught up with me. Sure. It's probably the easiest way I don't know how to say it. Okay. Okay? But is there a problem with even this being the center of the theme of this chapter?

I'll say what I said again. Why not do this in chapter 3? You know, chapter 4, he's walking out and looking over everything going like this is all mine and I did this.

[12 : 17] But in chapter 3, he's saying, worship this. Worship me. Like it's not just hit. Like chapter 4 is like a very personal thing. Like, it's just him and God.

Like, you know what I'm saying? He's walking out, he's looking at all this, and then God strikes him with judgment then? But in chapter 3, he's misleading all the nations.

why not strike him with judgment there? To me, to me, that makes a whole lot more sense. So, so I say all that to say is that I don't think that either one of those is the central theme of this chapter.

And, and until we can get to the central theme of the chapter, we don't really know what this is all about. And, and getting to the central theme is going to require some work on our part. Yes, ma'am?

He's been told what's going to happen and he's doing it. That is true. And, and, and you are, you are knocking on the door of where we're headed because it's very important to look at what he was told.

[13 : 23] As a matter of fact, one of the things, if we're going to determine the theme of a particular chapter to try to understand what is this about, we've got to go back and we've got to look at stuff like context, right?

We've got to look at the context of Daniel's writing. One of the things that we talked about Daniel's writing is that even though he's called a prophet, his writing is included with the wisdom literature, one.

It is also apocalyptic so you get these visions that have to be sort of interpreted. We look for the clues in the text that tell us what things mean and this one does a great job of telling us what everything means.

We don't have to guess, right? But he's, who's Daniel writing to? Who's Daniel's audience? You remember?

Jews who are in exile. Jews who are under oppression. Jews who've lost their homeland. Now think about this, okay? Let's just say, let's just say that our first theme, the idea of the dangers of pride, and if it's the dangers of pride, then what you see is you see Nebuchadnezzar's arc going from prideful, arrogant, God's judgment, and now humble.

[14 : 47] So, Nebuchadnezzar is a good guy in chapter 4 if that's your theme. Here's Nebuchadnezzar. He's like, you know, I've done this bad thing and I have this, you know, but God's humbled me and so now I praise the God of heaven.

How does Nebuchadnezzar, being the hero of chapter 4, help oppressed Jews who are under his oppression? Oh, that doesn't at all.

It's like saying, it's like saying, well, okay, anyway, I won't say that, but it's like, it's like the Jews, it's like telling the Jews, Hitler is your guy. I mean, that doesn't help them at all.

And even, even God judging, now God judging pride, that might give a little bit, but they're going to be in this exile for 70 years.

This is just the beginning. How are they going to live with this? And so we've got to keep that in mind as we kind of come up with, well, this is what this chapter means.

[15 : 48] Here's the other thing we need to do. We need to talk about some repetition. And there's some repetition things, repeated things, that I just want us to kind of look at and kind of walk through because from that we're going to build what the theme is.

Okay? So, first of all, I have this idea of the setting, the time and place. There are three verses in all of this that give us kind of a time stamp or a location stamp that tell us where these certain things happened.

can you find them in your text there? It refers to Babylon.

Okay, Babylon. What verse are you looking at? Six. Okay, six. Okay. Where was he when verse six is happening?

In the palace. He's in the palace. He's in his house, right? So that's what I saw first was his house, verse four. Location in Babylon. Okay, then there's a time stamp that comes down later.

[17 : 00] It tells us so many times later. Seven periods. Okay, there's a seven periods. That's verse 34. And then there's one in the middle.

Verse 29. Twelve months later. The reason I say that is because that forms, you got this first part where he has his dream, right?

Then you see twelve months later the fulfillment of that dream, and then you see verse 34 the results of the fulfillment of that dream.

And in each of those sections you almost have like a scene of the story and in each of those sections we also see some things related to kind of the theme that's going to come out.

Okay? So there we have the setting in those three places. Alright, now let's think about Daniel. Okay? Now let me just encourage you. I was thinking about this. sometimes the different Bibles that we buy and we use, I know there's some Bibles like, I've seen some people using like a living Bible, and I've never used living Bibles, I don't know if it has this, but I do a lot of pointing out specific verse numbers, and if your Bible doesn't have those verse numbers, that may be hard for you sometimes, so I just encourage you to be sure you've got one.

[18 : 29] If yours has got those verse markings in it, that's great, but it's just always helpful to have that. So we're going to look at Daniel for a second. He described, Nebuchadnezzar describes Daniel three times.

What does he say about Daniel? He says it in verse 8, 9, and 18. Verse 8, 9, and 18, what does he say? What does he say? What does he say? Daniel's got what?

Spirit. Spirit. Spirit of the holy gods in him. So Nebuchadnezzar is recognizing there's something about Daniel that is so different from everybody else. We know this from the previous chapters that we've looked at, but it's, for some reason, this is important to Nebuchadnezzar as he's thinking about this, because what he's about, what's about to come down is a message from God.

And so to accentuate Daniel as the messenger is kind of important here. There's a message that Daniel's bringing, okay? And God's given that message, Daniel's just interpreting it.

Okay, now we see God has made reference to several times. Okay, so I'm describing Daniel, that's verse 8, 9, and 18. But then the name of God, is there, but it's not God or Lord, it's another name.

[19 : 56] Do you see what he's called, what God is called here? Look like verse 2 or verse 17. The most high God.

Yeah, that happens to be verse 2, verse 17, verse 24, verse 25, verse 32, verse 34, are all most high, most high God, most high is ruler, the most highest ruler, the most highest ruler, and verse 37 is the king of heaven.

The king of heaven. So, in other words, as, so, you can tell that Nebuchadnezzar has written part of this chapter. Chances are, Daniel took the official report that Nebuchadnezzar wrote, and edited it, and brought it into his, his work.

Because there's places that Nebuchadnezzar has no idea what happened, and Daniel has to edit part of it. So, so, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this is all there, and every word's important because God has inspired all of it, right?

And so, it's interesting that God is being talked about as the most high. The most high is the ruler. The most high is the ruler. He's the king of heaven.

[21 : 15] So, the, the emphasis on who God is, is not, some, some, some books could give us the emphasis of God as the God who is near us, or the God who is strong, or like with Abraham, with Isaac, the God who will provide.

But what we have here is that God is ruler. God is ruler. God is ruler. God is ruler. I mean, that's just the emphasis over and over again. Yes, ma'am. Well, you know, all of this and Nebuchadnezzar saying all of this, it's like he already knows this, but he continues to be like, I'm the powerful one.

But here, he's like saying the most high God, because Daniel is a representative of the most high God. It's almost like he's given reverence to a most high God, yet he still wants to be top dog.

You know? Yeah. It's kind of a weird little... Well, so, I don't know that I fully understand what you're saying, but let me say something just to be sure that this part's clear.

The chapter begins like movies that I don't like, where it starts with the end, right? It starts with the end and the conclusion, and then it tells you everything happened. I don't like movies that way.

[22 : 30] You know, I just want to go ahead and start the movie. And so, a lot of what we see is his reporting of his fall from his pride to his humility, reality.

And the end result seems to be a moving... You know, each chapter we've said, Nebuchadnezzar's not converted here. He doesn't seem to be, you know, really honoring God here.

But it does seem at the end of this that maybe he's moved even closer to a place of conversion. I'm not sure that he is converted, but he's at least moving closer to that.

Does that make sense? It's like from each chapter he's kind of gradually gotten closer. Is that sort of what you're saying? Okay. Yeah, he's just so hard-headed. He's gotten all of these reprimands and continuous problems.

And then, okay, you're going to suffer really now and maybe you'll get it. You know, doesn't that remind you of the children of Israel in the wilderness? How many times did God provide for them and yet they complain?

[23 : 29] Even now. I know. How many times? How many times do we do the same thing? You know, why did the twin towers get hit? Where was God? We don't even believe in God. Why would you go in here?

Yeah, great point. Yeah. But, Nebuchadnezzar still does not release any of his slaves. Doesn't it take until King Cyrus?

Yeah. Yeah, they don't get out of exile until another nation is taking over them. Yeah, that's exactly right. So, I'm not sure that he ever does truly convert. I just think he gets closer and gets a little bit more humble, but we just don't know what his spiritual state was.

So, a couple more repetitions. We've got the word earth that occurs in several places, and in some instances it's going to be the word like ground or something like that.

Here's why I'm pointing this out. The image or the vision of the tree was in the midst of the earth. That's verse 10. It was visible to the end of the whole earth.

[24 : 35] Right? That's verse 11. Verse 20, the tree reached the sky and was visible to all the earth. Verse 22, your dominion is to the end of the earth.

So, what he's saying is that Nebuchadnezzar's reign, his kingdom, was worldwide and consuming of the whole world.

And so all the nations came to him. There was not another kingdom that was of any significance whatsoever. He's already defeated Israel. He's defeated Egypt. He's defeated Assyria.

And so he is the king of the world. Okay? And the problem is going to be is that he's not satisfied with that.

Right? He wants more, but he can't have more. Then we get the word heaven. The word heaven is in verse 11, 12, 13, 15, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 31, 33, 34, 35, 37.

[25 : 36] The word heaven is all through this thing. Sometimes they use the word sky. So sometimes it's the word sky. So like, I'll go back to verse 20, you know, it reached to the sky or to the heavens is the word that's there.

The point with talking about heaven is that about four of those times, it's speaking about Nebuchadnezzar and his rule and that he's, his rule reaches to the heavens or that the, the dew of heaven falls upon him.

But then you've got the watchers. Okay? So the watchers are just angels. Okay? That's just, that's just all they are. There's nothing else about them really that you need to know. These, the word watcher is an Aramaic word and this is just how Nebuchadnezzar would refer to what the Hebrew Bible and the Greek Bible would call angels.

Okay? So they're just angels. But verse 20, verse 15, 23, 25, 26, 31, 33, 34, 35, 37 are all about God most high.

He's the ruler of heaven. He's the king of heaven. He's the ruler in heaven. So, so what we're beginning to see is we're beginning to see that it's not just about Nebuchadnezzar's pride.

[26 : 52] It's about this battle between the ruler of heaven and the ruler of earth. Okay? The, the last sort of repetition we need to look at is the idea of some phrases.

There's some phrases that are repeated and I'm going to give you this word called inclusio. It's right up here on the screen. This is a, this is an interesting little word. Everybody say inclusio.

Inclusio. Inclusio. That is a literary term and what this means is bookends. Bookends. So you've got it at the beginning and you've got it at the end.

Now why don't they use the word bookends? Well, because people like to seem smart. So, that's all I can tell you. But this is a little bit like the chiasmic structure that I showed you where you've got the parallels that meet in the middle in like the concentric circles, right?

But this is more like bookends and the bookends happen to be verse 3 and verse, I think, 34. So, in verse 3, his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and his dominion is from generation to generation.

[27 : 59] But in 34, it flips that and says his dominion is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom endures from generation to generation. So, it starts with kingdom, ends with kingdom, has dominion as the second, has dominion as the first.

Does that make sense? Kind of like that concentric circle looking sort of thing. This is what the whole story begins with, this is what the whole story ends with, and it is this, that God is the ruler of all things.

That he, his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. His dominion is from generation to generation. generation. That helps us to begin to see what it was that Daniel was trying to teach the Israelites.

They needed to know God is the sovereign ruler over everything. There's one more piece of the puzzle to put into all of this.

And I'll go back to the different translations of the Bible that we're using because I'm going to talk about the idea of following the word until. until. In my New American standard, the word until occurs in a couple of places.

[29 : 10] In one place, the New American standard did not translate it as until, but translated it as in order that. And I'll see if I can show that to you.

Daniel chapter 4 verse 17, this is inside the dream, and this is the first time that we see until that's important for us.

And he says this, this sentence is by the decree of the, let's see, I'm going to use that, of the angelic watchers, and the decision is a command of the holy ones, until the living may know that the Most High is ruler over all the realm of mankind.

In other words, this command is going to be there for a purpose, or until all the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of man. He bestows it on whom he wishes and sets it over the lowliest of men.

So, in other words, the dream's point is so that people might know that God is the sovereign ruler over all things. Well, in the interpretation, you get something similar.

[30 : 23] Let's see if I can go back. Go back. Stop it. Stop it. Verse 25 and 26, that you may be driven away from mankind and your dwelling be with the beasts of the field and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize the Most High is ruler over the realms of mankind and bestows it on whomever he wishes.

There again, now in the interpretation, Daniel is now saying this is the point, king. All this is going to happen until you recognize, until all people recognize, God is the sovereign ruler over all things.

That's why this is happening, so that that becomes the recognition in everybody's mind. Everybody needs to see this and you, you king especially. I think he says something similar to that in verse 26, and in that it was commanded to leave the stump and the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is heaven that rules.

Once you recognize that it's heaven that rules, then this will come to an end. So, so we have the angelic watchers saying this, we have Daniel saying this, because we had the dream, we had the interpretation, and then now we have the fulfillment of the dream.

So in all three scenes, the dream, the interpretation, and the fulfillment, three different people, the watchers, Daniel, and this heavenly voice all say the same thing.

[32 : 06] Look at this. This is the voice walking around on the roof, right? He's going like, I'm great, I'm great, I'm great. And the voice from heaven comes down, starts talking to him, and says to him, you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field, and you will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize the most highest ruler over the realm of mankind, bestows it on whomever he wishes.

You see that repetition? Like, because of repetition, we have a tendency to turn our brain off, because we get it the first time. So we see this repetition of the dream, and the beast, and all the things, and we turn our brain off, and when we do, we miss the point.

The point is, for the recognition that the most high is ruler over the realm of mankind. You see, it was Nebuchadnezzar who was said to be the ruler over mankind.

Right? The tree is the fact that it's over all the earth, it extends to the ends of the earth. But that's not really the truth. It's not really Nebuchadnezzar who's ruler, but it's the ruler of heaven who's the ruler over the realm of mankind.

He's the sovereign king of all things. As a matter of fact, this is the way I would rephrase the theme of the chapter. God's people in exile need to know that God is sovereign over all the kingdoms of men.

- [33 : 35] He establishes them, He removes them, they have their existence because of Him, they flourish because of Him, they decay because of Him, they do nothing apart from Him.

He rules all. Now, you tell a Jew under the oppression from Nebuchadnezzar, God is the ruler over all things and God established Nebuchadnezzar there.

They may not like that, but they're at least beginning to understand where does their hope lie? Does their hope lie in getting out of this? Or does their hope lie in the fact that God controls the king?

It's in the fact that God controls the king. So, I want to take then and think about what this means in an application way for us.

Because if that's the theme of this chapter, what does it mean for us? And I want to give you a couple of things. Number one, we really need to reckon with the idea that God is sovereign over all. That God is sovereign over all.

- [34 : 42] The word sovereign means that He has the right, the wisdom, and the power to do what He wants. He has the right, He has the wisdom, and He has the power to do what He wants.

And as He's sovereign over all things, that means that both in His decrees before creation and in His providence in time and space, He is working all things out after the counsel of His own will.

Ephesians chapter 1 verse 11. And there's a couple of examples through the Bible of this God's control, if you will, God's sovereignty sort of bursting through the scene and us getting to see it.

The first example is the example of Joseph. Right? Joseph is a man who's taken off into slavery and into bondage because his brothers hated him.

And in the end, what he says about that to his brothers is right here in Genesis 50 verse 20. As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result to preserve many people.

- [35 : 54] He's basically saying God is the one who's done this. God is the one who allowed this to happen in order for me to be here in order to save all these people because that's what's going to happen with Joseph there in Egypt, right?

His presence is going to make it so that he's interpreting. And to me, the story of Daniel and Joseph are very parallel in a lot of ways. You get the dream of the Pharaoh, and you get the seven years, and you get all this sort of stuff, but the point is that God showed up, God was there, God was sovereign over the whole thing.

Nothing happened apart from the will of God. What's remarkable to me is how many pagan nations the Jews had to be slaves of and subjected to.

Just to, okay, you think you're going to go your way and you're not going to follow me? Remember that I'm bringing you to the promised land, and you keep rebelling, well, pagan nations are going to keep taking the way.

That's right. How many times does it take? That's right. Another example of this is the life of Job. The life of Job. Job was a man in the land of Uz, and he was blameless and upright fearing God turning away from evil.

- [37 : 14] His seven sons, three daughters were born to him. His possessions also, 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, very many servants, and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

he was probably a contemporary of Abraham, just so you know. Yet, when Satan comes in to visit with God, you probably know the story, the sons of God come to counsel with God, and Satan comes with them.

God is the one who points out Job to Satan. The Lord says to Satan, from where do you come? Satan said to the Lord, from roaming about the earth and walking around it.

And the Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil. In other words, this wasn't Satan's idea, this was God's idea.

What's about to happen to Job is God's idea. Satan asked to be able to test Job, and what happens in the resulting thing is on the same day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, the oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them.

[38 : 31] The Sabaeans attacked and took them, and they also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you. And while he was still speaking, another also came and said, fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.

And while he was still speaking, another also came and said, the Chaldeans, which is the early form of the Babylonians, right, formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.

And while he was still speaking, another also came and said, your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you.

Tragedy upon tragedy upon tragedy upon tragedy all within the span of ten minutes. It gets reported to him. And what happens?

Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with boils. Satan had gone back to God and said, God says, look, he didn't curse me. And Satan says, well, touch the man. And then he will.

[39 : 38] So he strikes Job with boils from head to foot. Sounds awful. So what happens? He scrapes himself.

His wife says to him, do you still hold fast your integrity, curse God and die? So not only is the bad stuff happening to him, his wife is even saying, you might as well just get it over with. So what I'm saying is that here is all of this that Job goes through, faces, holding on to his integrity in the middle of this.

God's sovereignty, God's sovereignty in the middle of all this breaking out in this story, bringing about all of these things. We'll go on to a third example.

We'll kind of come back to Job here a little bit. The third example is that of Jesus. Right? Jesus is him who knew no sin. Right? He knew no sin, but he was counted to be sin on our behalf.

Hebrews 4, 15 says that he sympathizes with our weakness, yet he's without sin. So he has no sin in himself. Hebrews 7, 26, it was fitting for us to have such a high priest who was holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners.

[40 : 56] My point is that you could look at a Joseph and a Job and say, yeah, but they were men and they were sinners, so them enduring some suffering is probably right, but then you'd be like Job's friends, right?

Jesus is sinless. He has no sin, yet what happened to him? Isaiah says that it pleased the Lord to crush him and to put him to grief.

It pleased the Father to crush the Son. Now, not in a happy, clappy, sort of sadistic way, but in the sense of his will and his purposes and his plans.

And then we see in Acts chapter 2, men of Israel, listen to these words, Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through him in your midst, just as you know this man delivered over by the determined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed him to a cross by the hands of godless men.

He was put to death by the predetermined plan, the foreknowledge of God. They even pray this in their prayer to God in Acts chapter 4, where they talk about against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed.

[42 : 10] There's been both Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the peoples of Israel to do whatever your hand and your purpose predestined to occur. God is sovereign over all things.

He's sovereign over the realm of men and what we see in the examples of these three men is how God's sovereignty sometimes is front and center in the text of scripture and it shows us that he's in charge.

and sometimes it fades to the background and we don't get to see it like in the book of Esther. We don't get to see what God is doing. Yet God is in charge of all things. And to be able to withstand and deal with the things that are going on in the world around us in the decay of our country, in the decay of our country, God is the sovereign ruler over the realms of men.

And he establishes kingdoms and he tears them down. And he's in charge. And we don't need, we don't need to have things our way in order to survive and live and be pleasing to the Lord.

Now I don't want it some bad way. I have a preference for how I want my life to go. But God doesn't ask me. In world history, what we have to see is that the world is moving towards a final end from which we cannot escape.

[43 : 41] God is raising up and tearing down kingdoms throughout history. And here's our part. All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

He controls all things. Go therefore make disciples of the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you and here's the best part.

I am with you always even to the end of the age. Maybe this world is going to survive another thousand years. Let's just put that in our heads for a second.

That this world is going to survive another thousand years. That means that my great-great grandchildren are not going to be around. Probably. I didn't do the math, but you get my point, right?

America probably would not exist for another thousand years. I mean, I just cannot see that happening. But I don't know. My point is this. this promise and this Christ will never change.

[44 : 54] Even if this country ceases to exist, even if the whole world goes into a darkness of communism, or if all of a sudden things turn out all of a sudden better and shifts in a different direction, a more positive direction.

The point is that all we need is God. He's the one that has the promise. He's the one that has all authority and all power. I know it doesn't look that way.

That's what Hebrews chapter 2 verse 8 talks about. Right here at this end, he says, but now we do not yet see all things subjected to him, but they are, even if we don't see it.

Now to come back to Nebuchadnezzar for just a second by way of an image with the same sort of thought, there's an interesting story that Jesus tells in one of the parables where he says this.

He presented another parable to them, and the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. What happens to this mustard seed?

[45 : 54] How big is a mustard seed by the way? Anybody know how big a mustard seed is? It's pretty small. I mean, it's not the world's smallest seed, but for the Israelites, that was a pretty small seed. What happens to it?

And this is smaller than all the other seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches. So, Nebuchadnezzar in his prosperity was a tree that all the birds of the air, the beasts of the field came to, so all the nations would come to him and they would survive.

And what he's saying here is that the kingdom of heaven is actually like that. The kingdom of heaven starts small, grows big, and all the nations will live within the kingdom of heaven.

What does that mean? It means that as we progress from here to the end, even though it may go from bad to worse, the church is going to start small, the kingdom of God starts small, and it's going to grow.

And it's going to succeed. It's not going to fail. You can see this on that level of history, but now I just want to turn it and talk about personal.

[47 : 03] Personal. Let's think about this in a personal way, because it's one thing to think about how God's in charge of all things in history and see that, but he's also in charge of all things for us too.

And that's where we kind of get back to Daniel chapter four, because how can we live knowing God's in charge? How do we need to live in difficult times?

And I'm going to give you three things. Number one, recognize God's control. Recognize God's control. people. In Daniel chapter four, verse two, Nebuchadnezzar says, it has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the most high God has done for me.

How great are his signs and how mightier his wonders. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. His dominion is from generation to generation. Even if Nebuchadnezzar doesn't really believe it, that's really true.

And the only way for us to deal with and survive and go through difficult times is for us to recognize God's control over all things.

[48 : 10] This is what's going on with Job, right? Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said, Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall return. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. He sees the suffering he's going through and he says God's in charge. I don't understand it. I'm not trying to make a big statement about it but I'm just saying God's in charge of all things because it was not a surprise to God what was going to happen to Job and his family and everything else.

And just because all that happens doesn't mean that God is all of a sudden kind of like, oh I'm sorry, I stepped away to go to the restroom or something like that. I'm sorry, I didn't see that that was going to happen. Or oops. There's no oops with God.

He's sovereign and in control of all things. He knows. He knows. So we need to recognize God's control.

But we also need to praise God's name. We need to praise God's name. This is what Nebuchadnezzar's doing. Right? At the very end he says, I Nebuchadnezzar raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me and I blessed the most high and praised and honored him who lives forever.

[49 : 28] I praised him. Because he does rule and reign, because he is in charge of everything, I praised him. I praised his name. That's what we should do as well. We should praise him. That's what Job does.

He says, he says, blessed be the name of the Lord. God, the best response we can have in the middle of suffering is to turn our tensions to lifting up high the name of God to praise him.

The number of times we have been going through difficulties ourselves and it was going back to praising God that soothed the hurt.

And for me, I'm not saying this is for everyone, but for me, especially singing praises to God is very soothing to my soul. I sing the truth and the truth in the form of music tends to just get to me and helps me to remember and to love and to cherish the Lord in spite of all the things I'm going through.

I don't know if you've got some good songs to sing, but I think about the idea of singing It Is Well With My Soul. If you know the story behind It Is Well With My Soul, which most people do, Horatio Spafford, when he sent his wife and daughters ahead of him across the Atlantic Ocean to England, gets a telegram back that there had been a boat accident.

[50 : 59] His two daughters drowned. His wife survived. And as he was going across the Atlantic to see his wife, the captain comes out and says, this is the spot where the boat went down.

And in the middle of that moment, that's when the words come into his mind, when peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot that has taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.

It doesn't mean we don't grieve and it doesn't mean that it doesn't hurt, but it means that in the middle of that there is this joy that stands up like a redwood tree that can't be burnt and can't be chopped down.

And it is that joy and that trust in the Lord, even while the whole thing around us is just burning. You know, it's like the fiery furnace. He's with you in the furnace.

He doesn't remove you from the furnace. So we still go through the difficulty. And I think it's good for us to sing praises to him. The last thing is we need to repent of complaints and pride.

[52 : 09] We need to repent of complaints and pride. We see in Nebuchadnezzar that as his reasons return to him, he blesses the most high God.

His statement is a statement that is moving past his pride and recognizing God. And again, I don't know if that's enough for him and I'm not trying to say one way or the other, but I am just saying that the example of that is a great example for us.

That we need to repent of our pride, we need to repent of our complaining. And you can even go to Job. And Job, so the way the story of Job goes, after he gets the boils, his friends sit down with him in silence for a while and they begin to question him because they're trying to say, you've committed a specific sin and that's brought all this tragedy upon you.

So if you repent of that, then maybe God will restore you. Job, the whole time, maintains his innocence and says, no, I've not done anything wrong. As a matter of fact, where is God?

I want God right here because I'm going to question God. And finally, God begins to speak and when he does, he says, you want to question me? Fine. Let me ask you a few questions first and if you can answer my questions, then I'll answer your question.

[53 : 24] And for chapters, God just has question after question after question after question. And the result of that onslaught of questions from God is this right here. Then Job answered the Lord and said, behold, I am insignificant.

What can I reply to you? I lay my hand on my mouth once I have spoken and I will not answer even twice and I will not add nothing more.

That this right here and that culture was a sign of repentance. repentance. What was he repenting of? He was repenting of being complaining about God to God, about God's sovereign control over all things.

We have to repent of our complaining and our pride against God. And I'm telling you something. When I'm in the middle of a suffering moment, that means that about every five minutes, that's what I'm doing.

Because those things just they well up inside of us and they're so hard to fight. The whole Christian life is not a life that says, oh, you got your oil changed at 3,000 miles.

[54 : 37] You don't have to come back for another 3,000. That is not the way the Christian life works. The Christian life is like this. You just breathed air. Great. Now breathe another breath. You just repented and turned back to the Lord and praised Him and trusted Him in this moment.

Okay, this next moment, do it again. And this next moment, do it again. That's what the Christian life is all about. And there's some moments my sinful nature wins. And my sinful nature turns in and begins to blame God and begins to be angry with God and starts taking it out on everybody else around me instead of dealing with my sin.

And what we need to do is we need to recognize that He's in control, praise His name, and repent of our complaints and pride. May God help us to be like Jesus in the garden, who when He was facing the suffering of the infinite wrath of God, says, let this cup pass from me, Lord.

Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. Yours be done. Well, let me pray for us and then if we've got some questions, we can take some questions.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. We need more of Your Word in our life that convicts us, that challenges us, that comforts us to know that even when we fail to handle our suffering well, this is why You sent Your Son to die on the cross for us, to forgive us for that.

[56 : 17] So I pray, Father, that You would help us to humble ourselves before You and that You would get all praise and all the glory. You would help us to know, to believe, and to love Your goodness.

And I pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.