



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Learning That Our God Reigns (Daniel 4)

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Dave DePue, Pastor / Kansas Capitol Commission / dave.depue@capitolcom.org

*“Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely” (Lord Acton 1900). A quest for power, wealth, and rapid success can be hazardous to your relationships. Falling out of favor with God and the people can destroy all those worldly gains. **Have you observed such great loss in someone’s life?***

INTRODUCTION

King Nebuchadnezzar and his father (Nabopolassar) built the largest and most powerful nation of its time 600 to 562 B.C. The capital city of Babylon was a showcase of the nation’s splendor. Their hanging gardens became known as one of the seven wonders of the world. Israel and Judah were among the nations conquered. Daniel was one of the young men captured and trained to serve in the Babylon government. He became chief of the king’s advisors through several miraculous events. Daniel coached the king through successes and failures in the process of him recognizing God’s sovereignty. **What has God used to show you that He is sovereign in your world?**

THE KING’S TERRIFYING DREAM

Daniel 4:4,5,6 I Nebuchadnezzar, was living at ease in my home and prospering in my palace. I saw a dream that frightened me; my fantasies in bed and the visions of my head terrified me. So, I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, in order that they might tell me the interpretation. (NRSV)

Note that the king reported this in the first person and repeated the word “my” in relation to success.

The king introduced Daniel as one with the spirit of the holy gods. Daniel repeated the dream three times in his writing, a sign that it was a certain warning.

The dream was of a giant tree, in the center of the earth, with abundant fruit, and shelter for all. A heavenly messenger chopped it down, leaving only a stump. Hearing this, Daniel was distressed, speechless. Nebuchadnezzar encouraged Daniel to give a report even if it was bad news. **How have you handled giving difficult news to a friend or a leader?**

JUDGMENT FOR PRIDE

Daniel 4:22 “...it is you, O king! You have grown great and strong. Your greatness has increased and reaches to heaven, and your sovereignty to the ends of the earth. And whereas the king saw a holy watcher coming down from heaven and saying, ‘cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the ground’...” (NRSV)

Daniel reported that this warning was from God, and it included Nebuchadnezzar losing his kingship. He would be driven into the wilderness to live as an animal until he recognized God’s sovereignty.

Daniel pleaded with the king to recognize his prideful sin and repent. Perhaps God would extend mercy. Jesus gave this same advice to a ruler (Mathew 19:16). **Have you seen a spiritual explanation for great loss?**

A LEADER’S HUMILIATION

Daniel 4:28-31 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 said, “Is this not magnificent Babylon, which I have built as a royal capital by my mighty power and my glorious majesty?” While the words were still in the king’s mouth, a voice came from heaven: “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: The kingdom has departed from you!” (NRSV).

The king may have suffered a breakdown, driving him into the wilderness for seven years. **Have you seen a person suddenly fall from power because of sin?**

GOD RESTORES A LEADER

Daniel 4:34 When that period was over, I, Nebuchadnezzar lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me. (NRSV)

Can you recall a situation when God restored a person who had fallen from a high position?

A PRAYER

Almighty God, please reveal Your Sovereignty during the lows and highs of my life. Help me to be bold yet humble in my service. I pray in this in the name of Jesus. Amen!