

Heaven Rules!

Daniel 4; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 1-9-2022

Introduction

Daniel is a book of history (chapters 1-6) and prophecy (chapters 7-12) that proclaims that God is sovereign over rulers and over history and will take care of his people.

Daniel 4

The Testimony (1-3)
The Dream (4-18)
The Interpretation (19-27)
The Fulfillment (28-33)
The Result (34-37)

The Dream

A Huge, Fruitful Tree
A Cut Down Tree and Stump
A Grass-eating Bovine
A Limited Condition
A Lesson to Be Learned
The Subject: King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (605-562 BC)

1. **God rules.** (3, 17, 24-26, 30-32, 34-37)

God rules through human rulers, whether good or bad.
God ultimately chooses human rulers through human choices.
God's choice of human rulers magnifies his greatness, not theirs.
What we credit to our power, we will also credit to our glory!
God rules according to what he determines to be right, wise and good.
God rules and nothing or no one can prevent his fulfilling his purposes and keeping his promises.
The temptation is to believe that 'Government is God' by those in government and by those dependent on government.

Application: *Give God all the glory and be glad.* - 1 Corinthians 15:10; Psalm 46:10

2. **God loves.** (1-2, 4-5, 8-9, 15, 17, 19-22, 27, 29, 34, 36)

The dream was a loving warning from God.

God uses all kinds of things to get our attention and usually uses whatever is needed for us personally to stop and take stock of our lives.

Daniel's love and concern for this pagan king is striking!

Daniel, in lovingkindness to the king, draws out the implications of the warning of coming judgment: repent!

God doesn't have to say anything before he brings a just judgment on sinners, but it is an expression of his loving heart when he warns us of what will happen if we do not repent. It was a whole year (12 months) before God fulfilled the warning of the dream which indicates God's loving patience with sinners!

Heaven rules, not hell! So love rules, not hate!

Application: *Love like the sun and love like the rain* (love even the unloving). – Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:32-36

3. **God brings suffering.** (1-3, 4-5, 10-17, 19-26, 28, 31-37)

If Providence is true, then every experience is an opportunity to see the hand of God and his good purposes at work in our lives.

It is good to testify of the good that God does for you and in you.

The suffering predicted is for sight or for recognizing the truth.

Suffering is intended to open our eyes to truth that will lead us to repentance and faith and peace and joy and salvation!

Suffering is never without a good purpose and at the top of the list is God's glory and our good.

Our reason has truly returned when we see the truth: that God rules, not us.

God did not mistreat Nebuchadnezzar by bringing upon him the suffering that he brought.

Suffering is brought to us by God so that we might be humbled and receive the grace that God gives to the humble!

Suffering is for sight: to see what we will not see or cannot see without it – the truth that sets us free.

Application: *Receive suffering as 'joy in the womb.'* - James 1:2-4; John 16:20-22

4. **God saves.** (1-3, 6-9, 18, 34-37)

This may be a testimony to God's saving grace in Nebuchadnezzar's life or a testimony to a lesson learned by a soul unconverted; it is not clear.

God saves from sin.

All he does is to lead us toward or to repentance.

God is at work to save from sin; not to make us comfortable in our sin.

God saves through suffering.

God saves especially through the suffering of His own Son on the cross.

Application: *Turn and trust.* – Psalm 145:17; Romans 2:3-6