

The Most High Ruleth in the Kingdom of Men

April 23, 2017

Daniel 4:1-37

“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?” Daniel 4:35

Nebuchadnezzar was one of the mightiest monarchs of the ancient world, the longest reigning king of the Babylonian Empire. He had fame, wealth, power and every other prize self-serving men crave. But he was only a man, wholly dependent upon our Creator for all things. Without God’s enablement, he was nothing. For the instruction of the entire human race, God taught this to Nebuchadnezzar in a very public manner.

“The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” This statement is repeated three times in this chapter (vv. 17, 25, 32). God showed this to Nebuchadnezzar, and through mankind. Amid the uncertainties and instability of the modern world, this is the only comfort one can have. And among the many lessons to be learned from this truth, consider three:

1. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). Nebuchadnezzar contemplated his vast kingdom and said, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built . . . by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30). At that moment, God humbled him. When King Herod had martyred the Apostle James and was plotting Peter’s martyrdom, he presented himself to his subjects, proudly appeared to flaunt his royalty. As he spoke, the people shouted “It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost” (Acts 12:23). “But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Psalm 75:7).

2. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will” (Proverbs 21:1). When God determined to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, He said to Moses, “I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen” (Exodus 14:7). Three times God repeated this to Moses that He would harden Pharaoh’s heart (Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 14:4). In contrast, God brought Nineveh’s king—another idolater—to repentance (Jonah 3:5-9).

3. Men’s genius, power and wealth do not impress God. “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness” (I Corinthians 3:19). “He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding” (Daniel 2:21). “Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in

these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 9:23, 24). “The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity” (Psalm 94:11). “And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain” (I Corinthians 3:20).