

Daniel 4 • The humbling of King Nebuchadnezzar

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

We're dealing here still with Daniel in the land of Babylon. Babylon is still in control, they have not yet been conquered by the Medo-Persian empire, that happens in the next chapter. But we are going to be dealing with a very important chapter here concerning Nebuchadnezzar and a particular dream that he got, received from the Lord and what it was all about.

So let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we dig into the scriptures tonight, we just really pray for your Holy Spirit to lead us and open our eyes to hear your voice. That is our desire Lord God, to hear from you tonight. We need your insight and understanding, we need your direction and wisdom. Guide us, Lord, help us to see clearly, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, a heart truly ready to receive and respond. We ask it Lord, in the name of Jesus our Savior. Amen. Amen.

Daniel chapter 4 begins like this in verse 1, "*King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you!*" (ESV) You can tell that at the very beginning of this chapter, that this is a declaration that's being made by king Nebuchadnezzar to his people and to his kingdom, which is made up of many nations because they, the Babylonians, had conquered many nations by this time. And so, he is giving this proclamation and what we're seeing in this chapter is the king actually speaking as if the events of this chapter had already taken place. And that is in fact the way it is. He's going to, we're going to go through and read in this chapter and see how things unfolded.

But Nebuchadnezzar is addressing the people based on the fact that he's already at the end of the story and he's kind of giving a summary, if you will, before the events even take place. It goes on to say, verse 2, "*It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.*" And then he even says, "³*How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.*" And that's really kind of the opening of this story that he's giving you and me.

He's giving us this narrative of what is about to take place. But now he begins to go back to fill in the blanks because obviously we don't know what has taken

place until we read it. So he begins in verse 4 by saying, *“I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. ⁵ I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me.”*

I'll have you stop there for just a moment because I need to tell you, as much as I like the ESV, which I'm reading from and do a lot of my studying from as well, I don't, I think that the word “fancies” here in verse 5 is a poor rendering. Because the Aramaic word, in this area, this is in Aramaic instead of Hebrew. But, this particular Aramaic word refers to images that are conceived in the mind and so I don't really particularly like the word fancies, but it is more of just images. Nebuchadnezzar is talking about the images that he saw and the visions that went along with them and he says that he was very alarmed by them.

Verse 6 says, *“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. ⁷ Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, ...”*

You can see that this is different from the last time he had a dream of the statue that we went through. This time he told them what the dream was, instead of that previous time where he made them tell him the dream. He goes on to say, *“⁷ ...but they could not make known to me its interpretation. ⁸ At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods...”*

Notice that is plural and we're stopping there, kind of before we get to the end of verse 8 because I wanted to bring out the fact that you can see here rather clearly in the way Nebuchadnezzar is writing this particular portion of Daniel, that he is still very much influenced by his pagan background. He's talking first of all about Daniel who received a Babylonian name “Belteshazzar”, which was named after the chief deity in Babylon. And then he makes reference to Daniel, a man in whom is the spirit of the gods, plural. And of course, we know that's wrong. We know that Daniel was simply a man who was gifted and anointed by the Lord God, creator of heaven and earth. But again, you're reading what was written by a pagan.

And so at the end of verse 8 says, *“... —and I told him the dream, saying, ⁹ “O Belteshazzar, 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 and their interpretation.”*

I think I'll stop you there just for a moment to kind of just make the point that you'll notice Daniel doesn't stop and correct the king, even though he makes mention multiple times that Daniel, you're a man who has, the spirit of the gods is in you and so on and so forth. You'll notice that Daniel just kind of moves on through and he doesn't get high centered on some of those issues.

There are certain things that we have to learn to just kind of let pass. When people are coming to terms with God and his word, they're going to get a lot of things wrong and it, this can be difficult for me, particularly as a teacher. And I've told you before, Sue always has to correct me or say to me, "Paul, you don't always have to teach" and she's right. There are times when you just, it's like, it's okay, it's okay, just don't worry about it, let it go, we'll get to those things later. Because sometimes you can kind of put a blockade in the way of someone moving forward in their growth and understanding of things by constantly correcting them.

If we can just bring people ultimately to the cross and they can, they will, where they will receive Christ and then of course we know they're going to receive His Holy Spirit, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Those things are all going to get taken care of, those things are going to get corrected by God Himself. Do you remember some of the things you thought before you were a Christian? Some of the crazy ideas maybe that you had, some of you were raised in homes that weren't necessarily believing homes, and perhaps you came from some really wacky sorts of belief systems and that's just kind of the way it is.

You talk to people in the world and they've got some really wild ideas. Well, there's a time to correct and there's a time just to let it go. Anyway, he goes on to say, ⁸ "...—and I told him the dream, saying, ⁹ "O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know (I'm reading verse 9 again) 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 and their interpretation. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. ¹² Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it. ¹³ "I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven."

Now, obviously this is an angel, but Nebuchadnezzar refers to him as a watcher, and that's again, just, or a holy one, and that's just Nebuchadnezzar's word. It's

going to be actually repeated respectfully by Daniel. But there's no other reference in the Bible to this particular title and so, this is just one that Nebuchadnezzar had for an angel.

It says that, *“¹⁴ He proclaimed aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ But leave the stump of its roots 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 beasts in the grass of the earth. ¹⁶ 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.’”*

So you can see that in this vision, Nebuchadnezzar sees this image, this enormous tree that he says is in the midst of the earth; it literally stretches up to heaven, and he says it can be seen from anywhere on earth. But then he sees this holy angel come down and make this declaration concerning the tree saying, lop it off, literally cut it down, strip its branches and scatter the animals from under it and let its fruit also be scattered and so forth.

But then he begins to speak of someone other than a tree and he begins to say, “let him” now, he doesn't tell us at this point who him is, but he says, *“¹⁵ ...Let him be wet with the dew of heaven.”* And he goes on to say, let this person, who is yet unknown, have his portion with the animals of the field and so forth.

And in fact, he says, *“let his mind be changed”* and the idea there is that his mind is taken away from him and he's given the mind of an animal, literally to think like an animal. And then it says that this is going to last for a time period that is referenced here as *“seven periods of time.”*

Now, there's a huge debate among some people concerning how long this time period is. Well, the fact is, the text doesn't specify how long a “period” is. It just says seven time periods or periods of time, if you will, but the majority of Bible scholars and students of the word believe that we're talking about a period of seven years. And we'll talk about why they think that here as we kind of move on.

And so, it goes on and says, *“¹⁷ The sentence (and this is still the words of this angel) 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 will and sets over it the lowliest of men.’”*

All right, and that's obviously a true statement. God rules the kingdoms of men and gives them to whom He will. So verse 18, *“This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”*

But you'll notice in verse 19 it says, *“Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. ...”* I want you to stop there. This tells us something very important, I believe that it wasn't that his other magicians or whatever weren't able to give him an interpretation necessarily to this dream, it's just they didn't want to, because this was bad news. And you don't want to give bad news to a guy like Nebuchadnezzar. I mean, these guys would just as soon lop off your head as listen to anything negative coming out of your mouth.

And so you can see that Daniel has a similar sort of a response that says he was dismayed, he doesn't want to tell Nebuchadnezzar. You remember in the book of Nehemiah, which you know is the same period of time, but much later, when the Medes and the Persians took over the Babylonian empire, they came into power. And you'll remember that Nehemiah was ministering before the king and he went into the king's presence, sad.

It was illegal to go into the king's presence with sadness on your face and if you got caught in the king's presence with sadness on your face, he could have you put to death, okay. So, depending on what kind of a mood he happened to be in, right? So, in fact, you'll remember in Nehemiah, the king actually even confronted Nehemiah and said, what is this, except this has to be sadness of heart. And he says, Nehemiah says, *“and so I prayed quick”* and I would've too. And he went on to kind of be honest and just kind of tell the king what was on his heart. But this is kind of the way things were, it was a dangerous thing to go into the presence of the king and to give him bad news because you know, you might not leave alive.

So the king has to kind of put him to rest at ease here. We're still on, in verse 19, it says, *“...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!”*

But obviously he knows that's not the case, so he goes on and he says, *“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.”

Now stop there, this probably wasn't a huge surprise to Nebuchadnezzar. Remember, this is the second dream that he's had and in the last dream where he saw this statue of these different metallic types, the top of the statue or the head of the statue was made out of pure gold and at that time, Daniel also said to Nebuchadnezzar, you are the head of gold. And that was a very clear, sort of an understanding that, his was the glorious kingdom of Babylon. And so, Nebuchadnezzar already knew that his was the glorious kingdom that he had at all. And there's probably no big surprise coming to him concerning this sort of a thing.

And so he goes on in verse 23 and he says, *“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: (all right, here we go, so Daniel takes a deep breath) 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 (at that means returned to you) from the time that you know that Heaven rules.”

In other words, from the time when you admit that there is a sovereign God who singularly rules all of mankind, when you come to that place, when you come to that admission, your kingdom will be returned to you. That's what Daniel is saying.

Verse 27, *“Therefore, O king, (and here's where Daniel injects his own counsel, his own admonition, his own exhortation) 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.”*

You can kind of tell here by the words that Daniel is giving to the king that the idea of repentance is still a possibility. In fact, what Daniel is saying to him seems to suggest to us that it was possible, that this, that the fulfillment of this dream not be inevitable. If in fact, Nebuchadnezzar would respond favorably to what Daniel is saying and what the vision has revealed, that he needs to repent, that God is sovereign overall. You might say, well, how do you know Nebuchadnezzar didn't already know that?

Well, for heaven's sake, in a couple of chapters ago, we read about how he was given the dream of this incredible statue, and he was the golden head and the very next, the very next chapter, we read that he created this huge statue and he told the people that they had to worship, bow down and worship. I mean, and when we say bow down, we're talking about get down on your face. Whenever the music plays, you get down, you worship this golden statue. Listen, Nebuchadnezzar had delusions of grandeur. He was a man who, and this was common among these kings to think that they were gods or to be worshiped as gods.

The pharaohs in Egypt did it too, that people would pray to Pharaoh. And so this was not an uncommon sort of a situation, but God is making the point to Nebuchadnezzar, you are not God. And at the point where you finally make an admission of that, and that there is only one sovereign God who rules the kingdoms of man, then your kingdom will be returned. But you need to know that there's a train coming and there's a wreck on the track because, if you don't repent, this thing is going to happen, your mind is literally going to be taken away from you, and you're going to be like an animal.

And by the way, there's no mistake in that. You might think, well, God could have done anything with Nebuchadnezzar, could have put him to sleep for seven years for all we know. I mean, it could have done anything, right? Why did he make him like an animal? Why an animal? Why take away his mind? Well, we're going to talk more about this as we get into, as we finish the chapter. But it's a picture, it's a picture of what it is to operate in this life apart from God.

It is a picture, and we, when we operate independent or at least try to operate independent of God, thinking, acting and so forth, talking like we're in charge of our own lives and so forth, we are acting like a brute beast. We're acting like an animal, and we begin to be dominated like animals are dominated by the flesh. I know there are some of you who have pets and you love your pets. Some of them, you even call your babies. I think that's weird, but that's okay. It's your business, it's your pet, you can call them what you want. They're animals and

they don't think like human beings because they don't have the ability to think like human beings.

You have a very unique gift from God. You are created in his image, and because of that you have the ability to reason, your dog or your cat does not. They don't, they don't reason, they act instinctively. They've been given instinct to move them to do whatever they're going to do, and of course, they're dominated by their stomach. That's why we can get animals to do things that we want them to do. We can train them to do things by giving them a treat, right? Yeah, and so you can appeal to an animal through their stomach. Well, that is a picture of carnal man, he is literally a slave to his appetites, his human fleshly appetites.

And that's what we are, that is what we are apart from God. We live to please our appetites, just like a dog or a cat, or any other animal, okay? So there's no mistake in this picture that God is giving us. So, Daniel gives this exhortation. But the next thing we read in verse 28 is that, "*All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.*" But then we find out when it came upon king Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 29 begins with these words, "*At the end of twelve months...*" Now you might think, God, when you do, when you delay to bring your word about by a year, you kind of, you're kind of feeding into someone's belief system that this was all a bunch of hooey. Because there's this long period of time, between when you say this is going to happen and it actually happens, and you're thinking to yourself, why didn't you have it happen the next day, or even the next hour, why 12 months?

Well, this is the heart of God and the heart of God is one of mercy. God is a God of mercy, and He gave 12 months for Nebuchadnezzar to respond to this vision, to respond in humility and to acknowledge the Lord God is the creator of all the universe and the one who gave him what he now has.

Anyway, it goes on to say at the end of 12 months, "²⁹ ...*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 (look what he says here) I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?"*"

That's a really stupid thing to say, but, this is what you do when you're full of pride. You begin to take ownership as if you created all of these things and you don't acknowledge God. You don't acknowledge His benevolence and goodness and His grace in your life. You just basically start calling attention to these

things and you start to own them as if they're yours. And you begin to hold onto your possessions with a closed fist rather than saying, the Lord gives, the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord. Those are the words of Job, by the way, who was a very godly man. (Job 1:21)

Oh, and by the way, in case you are wondering if Nebuchadnezzar is just blowing hot air when he talks about the glorious splendor of his kingdom. The fact of the matter is, archeology has proven this to be the fact. Isn't it great that archeology has never once disproven the scriptures and only ever validates the scripture. And archeology has confirmed that Nebuchadnezzar was responsible for huge projects within the city of Babylon. The hanging gardens are one of the well-known things that Nebuchadnezzar designed and put into place and Babylon really truly was an amazing city. But you'll notice here again that he says, this was all done by my mighty power, and it was done for the glory of my majesty right?

And here it says in verse 31, *“While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, (in other words, a voice was heard saying,) “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.”*

And *“Immediately”*, now we've had 12 months for him to do it, so now this judgment is immediate, *“³³Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, (that does not sound good) and his body was wet with the dew of heaven (and that's just a poetic way of saying he lived outdoors) till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.”* And by the way, this description that is given of him, is one of the reasons why we believed that these seven periods of time were seven years.

Because in order for his hair to grow that long, that it was almost like the feathers of an eagle and so on and so forth, it seems like seven years would be the necessary time period for that to happen.

Now, we're not given really any of the information about this seven year time period. It's simply, the story simply jumps to the end where it says, *“³⁴At 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?"

And by the way, if you ever wanted a good definition of sovereignty, there it is. The word "sovereignty", which is applied to God and is true as a descriptive word related to God, is very much what is given here. He does according to His will and no one can stay His hand. No one can come against Him, no one can say, why are you doing that? And no one can stop Him from doing what He does, that is sovereignty.

And you can see that Nebuchadnezzar, with his reason now returned, openly acknowledges the sovereignty of God. But it goes, excuse me, it goes on and it says, *"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."*

Those are some great statements. You can see that Nebuchadnezzar learned his lesson and the things that he's saying about God are absolutely true and they're important things for us to see. Because even we as believers today, we can doubt some of the things that he says here in verse 37, in the very last verse of the chapter. Have you ever had a situation happen in your life where something hurtful, painful, maybe even tragic, took place and you simply said, that's not right, that's just not right.

And I, and maybe you even got to the place of doubting the justice of God, you wouldn't be the first person to do that. There are some biblical characters who doubted the justice of God from time to time.

But Nebuchadnezzar says, makes a very important statement, which is, and it's kind of humbling for us to hear it coming from the lips of a pagan king. *"All his works are right."* *"All his works are right."*

Do you believe that? That's a tough one, it's a tough one because we see things from our perspective, and from our perspective, things are painful. I mean, we live in the midst of a broken and fallen world. People ask all the time. In fact, I had a lovely young woman write to me just a painful, heartbreaking note and said she'd just recently miscarried. She was devastated and she was asking all

the typical questions that people ask when they go through a time like that. She desperately wanted a child, and yet this miscarriage happened somewhere, something like 14 weeks into the pregnancy and she was asking questions like, “is God mad at me? Have I done something wrong? Am I unworthy?”

And of course I always have to, well, yeah, you are unworthy, but let's, well get into that right now because none of us are worthy, but those are the questions that people ask. And because we see, all we see is our pain. We see our situation for what it is and what it feels like and what it feels like is bad. There's nothing good and it's very difficult to say all His works are right when what I'm going through right now is so wrong to me in my eyes. But I believe with all my heart that what Nebuchadnezzar is saying here is true.

I believe it, I believe all His works are right and I believe His ways are just, and I also believe, and this is something actually repeated many times throughout the scripture, this very last statement that Nebuchadnezzar makes in the chapter is, “*those who walk in pride, He's able to humble.*” Why is it necessary though, that they, that we need humbling. It's interesting we can trace this all back to the beginning, we go back to the book of Genesis and we see the creation account where God created the man and the woman, and He put them in the garden and He gave them everything they wanted and He created them, as we said earlier, with the most incredible gift that He gave no other living beings in His creation. And that is the beautiful, gracious gift of being created in the image of God.

And that doesn't mean we look like God, it means that we were given things that are after His image. We were given reason, we were given a mind that can think through situations, circumstances, and we can reason them out. Again, you can't do that with your dog, you can't reason with your dog. You can command them, but you cannot reason with them. Its why God says to the people of Israel through Isaiah, come let us reason together, though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. (Isaiah 1:18)

God can say that to you, because you're not a dumb animal, regardless of what evolutionary science wants to tell you. You are created in the image of God and that makes you unique among all of creation. Now God also blessed us, and I'm talking about mankind here, to have fellowship with Him, to walk with Him, to know Him, and most importantly, to be entirely dependent on Him to receive life. To receive His life, His goodness, His provision, and all the wonderful things that God desired to pour into our lives.

But you see that picture was interrupted and we see it right there in the book of Genesis. We get to chapter 3, I've always hated reading chapter 3, because

everything is so good up to that point, and then it just turns all bad and it stays that way for the rest of the book until you get to like the last chapter of Revelation.

And of course we know what happened because the enemy interrupted God's plan for mankind and this work that God desired to do in man. And of course, you've read through Genesis, you know that the essence of the serpent's temptation was essentially, you don't need to live your life this way. You don't need to live your life under the thumb of God, you can be your own God. You can be like, God, if you just eat the fruit of this tree, you will be like God. You can make your own rules, you can make your own decisions, you don't have to wait for anybody to tell you what to do. You can be your own master, you're in charge, take that charge. You can live independent of God, be your own person, so break free, break free, be free. You don't want to live like a slave, do you? That's the voice of the enemy, who wants to live that way? You need to be free, be your own God.

And sadly, that's exactly what happened, that's exactly what Adam and Eve did. It was a false bill of goods that promised them freedom and independence. But what they got instead was bondage. Bondage to sin and death and the curse of death. So, we read through Daniel chapter 4 and we realize that Nebuchadnezzar is kind of the poster boy for all those who follow in this same sort of a pattern of living who insist on their own kingdom to wear their own tinsel crown and say, I am master of my own universe, master of my own destiny, I am independent, I am free, I'm my own man and I'm going to do my own thing. And however many years it has been since mankind first fell into sin there's one thing that is certain, and that is nothing has changed, nothing has changed. Like Solomon said, there's nothing new under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 1:9) It's the same old, same old.

And there was a point in time when Psalmist the almost looked upon the leaders of mankind and said, this is the attitude that I see. So, look on the screen with me. Let me show you Psalm chapter 2, verses 1 through 3. It says,

Psalm 2:1-3 (NIV84)

Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters."

Why do the nations conspire and the peoples (meaning the peoples of the world) plot in vain? (meaning plot against God. He said,) The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers (they all) gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. (and this is what they say, we're going to,) "Let us break their chains," (we're going to be free) they say, "and throw off their fetters." (We're going to be our own people. We're going to make our own decisions. We're going to be our own gods).

Same thing's been going on since the very beginning. The Psalmist is just simply acknowledging this attitude of man that has taken over in the heart of man, this drive for independence. And we've become arrogant, and in our arrogance we say all kinds of crazy, stupid things about God, about our lives and you know what the stupidest thing we say is? You ready for the absolute dumbest thing that a human being can ever say? Here it is, I don't believe in God.

As if you're smart enough to know, there's no way you could know. First of all, God, the only reason we know there is a God, is He's revealed himself. You can't find God on your own, He has to reveal himself and I'm thankful He does. He's revealed himself in nature. Paul tells us that in Romans chapter 1, he says that you look at the heavens, he says, in fact, the heavens declare God's glory, right? (Romans 1:18-20) They speak in any language that is known to any man or a woman in the world.

And God speaks through nature and He says, I'm here. And what do we see in nature? We see design, incredible, intricate, powerful design. And where there's design, there has to be a designer. And you can deny that if you want to, but again, that's arrogant stupidity, that's all that is. It's like looking at a watch and saying nobody made that, that just, I found that under a rock, it appeared there after millions and millions of years and it works perfectly, keeps perfect time and yet that watch is so far beneath your physical body and what it can do and perform.

And yet we stay all the time, oh yeah, we just evolved. When our bodies are a marvel of design, and we've learned that in the last few decades when we've talked about this before. Microbiology has just in my mind, it, you have to literally put your hands over your eyes and put your fingers in your ears to ignore what has come out. We now know that our cells, the cells of our body are mechanisms that produce data, that scream design, but our arrogance keeps us from seeing it, you see. Man's arrogance, no!, listen, let's just be honest about it, evolutionary theory is nothing more than an atheist's religion, that's all it is. It's his belief system, it, because the alternative is to believe in God and so he comes up with evolution, so I don't have to believe in God. Personally, I think it

takes more faith to believe in evolution than to believe in God. I want you to see something from the book of Proverbs, though, that's important. Proverbs chapter 16 says,

Proverbs 16:5, 18-19 (ESV)

Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished. Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Everyone who is arrogant in heart (and this is strong language) is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished. Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil (or in other words, share the wealth) with the proud.

And the reason that the writer of Proverbs makes that statement there is very simple, because arrogance is the outgrowth of a sinful, self-centered heart that says, I will be independent of God, I will, I demand my independence. I'm going to close with a quote here that I'm going to read to you. I've quoted over the years many times from books written by A.W. Tozer and in his book: *The Root of the Righteous*, in fact, it's the last section of that book, he writes about the pride of man, and particularly how it looks against the backdrop of the eternity of creator God.

But he says these words, I'll just read this to you, it's just a couple of paragraphs. He says, the famous poet "*Shelley tells of the traveler who saw in the desert two vast and trunkless legs of stone, and near them half-buried in the sand lay a shattered face with a "wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command." On the pedestal where once the proud image had stood were engraved these words: "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair." And, says the poet, "Nothing else remains. Round the decay of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare the lone and level sands stretch far away."* But Tozer adds this, he says, "*Shelley was right except for one thing: Something else did remain. It was God. He had been there first to look in gentle pity upon the mad king who could boast so shamelessly in the shadow of the tomb; and He was there when the winds of heaven blew down the statue and by the swirling sands covered with a mantle of pity the evidence of human decay.*" (*Root of the Righteous*, A.W. Tozer) God was there last.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this study tonight in Daniel chapter 4 and it's a very simple, very simple message. You are God and we are not and what we have in this life is from you, every single bit of it. And we give the glory to you Lord. We give the glory to you Lord, for we are like dust.

We are here today and gone tomorrow, and so we confess tonight our utter dependence on you and we pray that you'd fill us, Lord with your Holy Spirit with understanding that we might hold on to a heart of humility and walk in that humility day by day. Not in the arrogance of independence and rebellion and self-rule, but instead in the understanding that you are the sovereign, eternal God who loves us, whose ways are right, and who is just and fair and true.

Thank you, Father, for the reminders that we get from this, and we pray that you'd forgive us for the times in our lives that we have insisted on our independence from you, and we've gone our own way and we've seen where it took us. We did our own thing, we made our own decisions, and we got to the end of that road and we realized it didn't take us anywhere except to hurt and destruction.

Forgive us, Lord, for those times when we insist on living and doing as we see fit rather than trusting in you with all of our hearts and leaning not on our own understanding. So fill us, Lord God, with wisdom, discernment and grace, to walk in humility all the days of our lives and to acknowledge you in all of the blessings that we have, for we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Savior and King, amen.