

Nebuchadnezzar: God Sovereign in Salvation

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[0 : 0 0] So we come now to our Bible reading, and you'll find that in the book of Daniel. Daniel chapter 4. Our associate minister, Paul Brennan, will be starting a new short series in this section in the book of Daniel.

And you'll find that on page 740 of the Church Bibles. Daniel chapter 4.

Beginning at verse 1. Hear the word of the Lord. 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 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.

[1 : 1 6] I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed, the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. 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, but they could not make known to me its interpretation.

At last Daniel came in before me. He who was named, he who was named Belshazzar, after the name of my God, and in 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 and 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.

[2 : 3 8] 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.

I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. 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. 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. 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 decisions 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.

[4 : 04] 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.

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, 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.

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.

[5 : 19] 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 a 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.

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.

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 iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.

[6 : 47] 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 great Babylon, which I have built by my power, mighty power, as a royal residence for the glory of my majesty?

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. He was driven from among men, and it grasped like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair grew as long as eagle's feathers, and his nails were like bird's claws.

At the end of days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High. I 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 host of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say to him, what have you done?

[8 : 40] 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 Lord 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.

Well, amen. May God bless us. This is his word. Very good. Well, please do turn up Daniel chapter 4. Let's just spend a few moments now together looking at this.

Daniel chapter 4. Now, testimonies can be a very powerful thing indeed, can't they?

Hearing how someone has come to a real and saving and living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Someone who has repented of their sin, sought forgiveness in the Lord, and submitted to him.

[9 : 58] Someone who has stepped from darkness into light. Someone who has thrown their lot in with the Lord, seeking salvation in him alone. However we might phrase it, it is always encouraging to hear how the Lord brings people to himself.

And it's always particularly encouraging when it's someone well known who tells their story. Well, chapter 4 of Daniel, it must be one of the ultimate conversion stories, one of the most powerful testimonies you'll ever hear, because of whose lips it comes from.

Nebuchadnezzar was the leader of the known world. He would have been described in terms now reserved for the president of the United States of America, the most powerful man in the world.

That was King Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian Empire, the peak of its powers, the hanging gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the world. It was the nation state of the day.

This is an extraordinary chapter. It is profoundly personal. It is a personal testimony from the king. But it's also piercingly polemic.

[11 : 12] It takes aim at the pagan rulers and religions of the day. So we'll look at it under those two headings. First, it is profoundly personal.

And then secondly, it's piercingly polemic. P is the name of the day. So we'll look at these first. Personal, profoundly personal. We'll spend most of our time on this one.

So when we get to the end of this point, we're not halfway through. We're nearly finished. So don't panic. So first then, Daniel chapter four is profoundly personal. And we see here, in Nebuchadnezzar's story, that God is able to humble and bring to real faith, even the most powerful of men.

So in this point, we're going to walk through the text, looking at four scenes. Verses one to three first, the conversion of a king. Then verses four to 27, the proclamation to a king.

Verses 28 to 33, the hubris and humbling of a king. And then finally, 34 to the end, the restoration of a king. So look first, verses one to three, the conversion of a king.

[12 : 22] And we have here in these opening three verses, the introduction, but also conclusion of all that follows. This is an extraordinary missive from the king of the Babylonian empire to all his subjects.

Notice there in verse one, the king is addressing all that follows to all peoples, all nations, all languages that dwell in all the earth.

This is the leader of the known world addressing his subjects. This would have been couriered to the far flung edges of the Babylonian empire.

It would have been brought and read out, declared to all his subjects. Now usually this sort of thing, it would have been a demand for taxes, or it would have been giving notice for the rousing of his army, that sort of thing.

So I don't suspect that the folk of the Babylonian empire would have suspected what was about to follow. Peace, at the middle of verse two, peace be multiplied to you.

[13 : 31] It has seemed good to me to show you the signs and wonders that the most high God has done for me. And the king states in verse three, the conclusions he has now reached about the most high God.

How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

And the rest of the chapter is then the account of how King Nebuchadnezzar got to this point. It's an account of his conversion. Now it's staggering when you think about who he was, what he was like, that he was able to utter these words.

But the really surprising thing is that this chapter is here at all. If you read through the first three chapters of the book of Daniel, you can't help but think that King Nebuchadnezzar should have been converted well before the events of chapter four.

He had had plenty of evidence. He had seen signs and wonders of the living God before chapter four ever happened. The king had witnessed the wisdom of God's people in chapter one.

[14 : 44] He had had dreams interpreted by Daniel. He's heard the word of God proclaimed in his presence. He's even seen the remarkable rescue of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace.

There could be no doubt as you read these opening accounts that the king was deeply moved at times, deeply disturbed by the words and works of the living God.

The trouble was, however, that those deep impressions, well, they faded over time. He never made the appropriate response. He never submitted himself to the Lord God who had revealed himself to him.

Those impressions faded, but they never really went away. The living God would not let Nebuchadnezzar go. It took the events of chapter four to bring him to his senses.

You see, the Lord God of heaven calls all people everywhere to humble themselves before him no matter who they are. And sometimes, if we refuse to humble ourselves, he will humble us.

[15 : 53] He may bring you to the absolute end of yourself such that you have nowhere else and no one else to turn to but the living God. And that is what he did with King Nebuchadnezzar.

And perhaps that's you here even this morning. Perhaps like Nebuchadnezzar, you have heard the evidence. You've spent time with God's people, perhaps even from birth.

You've been raised among the people of God. Perhaps you've only been amongst God's people a few times. Perhaps you've only heard a sermon a few times. But you know, you know there's something really here.

You've heard the living God speaking through his word. And if that's you, hear the implicit warning of this chapter. You see, the greatest stumbling block for Nebuchadnezzar was not ignorance.

He was not ignorant of the living God. But rather, it was his arrogance, his pride, his refusal to humble himself, to really humble himself before the living God and submit to his rule.

[16 : 59] So the warning's this. Humble yourself now before the living God. Humble yourself before he humbles you. Let's look on then and trace Nebuchadnezzar's story from hubris to humbling and then finally restoration.

So verses 4 to 27, we see the proclamation to a king. God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar when he was least expecting it.

Look at verse 4. He was at ease in his house. He was prospering in his palace. Babylon was a stunning city.

Nebuchadnezzar was in many ways a very successful king. And you can just imagine him enjoying the fruits of his labors. And those fruits would have been considerable, wouldn't they? The Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

But despite all his enjoyment in life, the living God again breaks in. He disturbs the peace. Nebuchadnezzar has not, despite all the revelation he's already experienced from God, come to a living faith.

[18 : 11] The Lord God would not let him rest. He had never really repented despite being so moved in the past as we've already seen. And in one sense, we're shocked.

If you read through the account, how could he not repent in light of all he's seen that's so obvious? But we condemn ourselves if that is our attitude.

Isn't that what we're so like so often? I know I was for 19 years. Despite God making things plain, we slip so quickly back into spiritual lethargy.

John Calvin comments about Nebuchadnezzar here. He says this, When God, therefore, wishes to lead us to repentance, he is compelled to repeat his blows continually, either because we are not moved when he chastens us with his hand, or we seem roused for a time, and when we then again return to our former apathy.

He is therefore compelled to redouble his blows. And that is just what the Lord does. He will not let Nebuchadnezzar rest.

[19 : 22] He hounds him. He sends him a dream that makes the king afraid, verse 5. The things he saw alarmed him. And Nebuchadnezzar calls for the usual useless suspects, the magicians, the enchanters, none of whom, as they've been unable to do in the past, none are able to tell the king the interpretation of his dream.

But then, enter Daniel, God's man, the preacher. And the king recounts to him his dream about this vast tree, the beautiful, fruitful tree, a tree that nourishes and provides shelter for all the beasts of the field and the birds of the air.

And then you have this holy one coming from heaven, and he makes a proclamation, chop down the tree, strip its leaves, scatter its fruit, but leave a stump and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth.

Let his mind be changed from that of a man to a beast. And this is all, verse 17, the decree is 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.

It's a very disturbing dream. And Nebuchadnezzar is understandably concerned and afraid. But are we really to think that he was absolutely clueless as to its interpretation?

[20 : 51] The purpose of the whole dream is made clear in verse 17. Look again. This dream was to teach him that God reigns, that he sets up and pulls down kingdoms. Even the most powerful men in the world rule at his pleasure.

Did Nebuchadnezzar really need to be sending for the magicians and astrologers to understand the dream? He knew, didn't he? Or at least he ought to have known, suspected what the dream really meant.

And he was perhaps scrambling to find a way out. Perhaps they'll give me another interpretation that will ease my conscience. This can't really apply to me. Surely, I'm Nebuchadnezzar.

This can't be about me. It must be somebody else. I wonder if that attitude creeps into our hearts from time to time. You maybe hear a sermon or you read a part of scripture.

You have a conversation with someone and it disturbs you. It moves you. You know deep down that God really is putting his finger on something in your life. You know that there's a call to repent.

- [21 : 54] But you scramble around trying to find a different interpretation. One that perhaps gets you off the hook. Well, stop scrambling. Sometimes we must repent.

Repent before God brings you to your knees as he did with Nebuchadnezzar. Well, Daniel gives the interpretation. And as Daniel speaks, the king's worst fears are confirmed.

But notice Daniel's own attitudes, his own emotions here. Look at verse 19. Daniel, despite being an exile serving the foreign king, he takes no pleasure in speaking the truth to the king.

Then Daniel was dismayed for a while. His thoughts alarmed him. And then he says to the king, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation before your enemies.

Daniel genuinely fears for the judgment that is about to befall Nebuchadnezzar. He wishes it was for one of his enemies. Daniel is really compassionate towards this pagan king.

- [23 : 03] He takes no pleasure in what he must say. But he doesn't hold back, does he, from proclaiming the truth. He speaks the truth. But he does so in real love.

He's deeply moved by what he's about to say. And as one commentator put it, that is the proper balance one meets in the Lord's true servants.

a love-driven sadness that cringes to speak the hard words of God, yet a God-honoring obedience that speaks them anyway. It's not easy, is it, to sometimes speak the truth?

But we must. And so Daniel speaks, and he says, yes, Nebuchadnezzar, as you perhaps feared, that tree, that tree is you.

You shall be driven from among men. You'll live with the beasts. You'll lose your mind. And that will happen until, verse 25, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.

- [24 : 12] But Daniel doesn't leave it there, does he? Yes, he tells Nebuchadnezzar the truth in all its fullness, but he also calls him to repent, verse 27. 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 to your prosperity. Daniel appeals to the king.

Heed the warning of the king, Nebuchadnezzar. Heed it before it's too late. And that is the Lord's appeal to everyone in all places, at all times, to each of us here this morning.

Repent for your sins. Turn now. Well, that's the proclamation to a king. Look on then to verse 28.

And we see here the hubris and the humbling of a king. Verse 28, all this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of 12 months, he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon.

- [25 : 16] And he said, is not this great Babylon which I have built by my mighty power for my majesty. Twelve months have passed since the events of verses 4 to 27.

A whole year. And it seems that the king has not heeded the warning. Nebuchadnezzar presumed on the grace and patience of God as each day went by and none of these warnings came to be.

He perhaps thought they would never come. It's a stunning example of hubris, isn't it? Of man's pride in his own achievements. Nebuchadnezzar thought he was the author of what was really a gift.

He surveyed his city, the great Babylon, and thought it was all down to him. Of course it was in a sense. He was a great king.

But he refused to acknowledge the one who enabled everything, the one who gave him his very breath. And isn't that how often we think? Even about the most basic aspects of our existence, we think we're the authors of what God has given us.

[26 : 28] He hadn't really taken on board the words of verse 17. The most high rules the kingdom of man. He gives it to whom he will. Nebuchadnezzar hadn't taken the Lord seriously enough.

And so the Lord has warned him and now the Lord will make him see the truth of those words. The Lord will do just as he promised. He will humble the great king Nebuchadnezzar.

And that is how the Lord sometimes works. He sometimes brings people, even great people, down low so they will see that they are but dust. And so the day that God warned would come, well it came, verse 31, while the words were still in the king's mouth.

All that is promised is reiterated and then it happens, verse 33. Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox.

The living God is indeed the one who rules the kingdom of man. He's told Nebuchadnezzar and now he demonstrates it in the most unmissable, unmistakable way he can.

[27 : 45] Nebuchadnezzar cannot now deny that God is who he says he is. He's been totally humbled. So I would urge you, friends, learn Nebuchadnezzar's lesson the easy way.

Learn from his hubris, his humbling. God says he is the one who rules the kingdom of man. He demonstrates it. Nebuchadnezzar didn't take him seriously enough, did he?

Seriously enough to be frightened in his dreams but not seriously enough to repent, to acknowledge God for who he really was. God had to make him see it. So don't follow Nebuchadnezzar's example, don't.

Yes, as we see in this chapter, God was merciful to him. God is wonderfully kind, isn't he, to Nebuchadnezzar? Time and again, he's shown himself to him in the first few chapters.

And again, in chapter 4, he brings him so low that all he can do is acknowledge God for who he is. That is a real act of kindness from the Lord, great mercy. And that is how God is at times, isn't it?

[28 : 50] We've had so many chances. That was true for me. Time and again, I hardened myself. But in the end, God brought me to my knees. But don't follow his example.

Don't presume on God's kindness. Next Sunday, as we look at chapter 5, it's another king, but it's a very different ending. Belshazzar refused to humble himself in spite of all he knew.

And it ends differently for him. So learn. Learn from Nebuchadnezzar's hubris and his humbling. But notice the last scene, verse 34 to the end, the restoration of a king.

At the end of my 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.

After all the horrors of his being driven from men, his losing his mind, his living as an animal, Nebuchadnezzar is restored. He's returned to sanity.

[29 : 59] And most of this section records the words he declared in his sanity. And notice that his reason returns to him, and then he blesses the Lord.

That is what sane people do. It is the most rational, sensible, logical thing in the world to praise the Lord because he is the ruler of the universe. He alone is sovereign.

Therefore, the sane response is to worship and bow down to him, isn't it? To refuse to do that is the opposite of sanity. And that is just what Nebuchadnezzar does.

He lifts his eyes to heaven. He acknowledges God for who he is. It is an astonishing turnaround, isn't it? The once proud king now declaring the glory of the living God.

It's astonishing, but it shouldn't surprise us. God is able to do this sort of thing, isn't he? He is the sovereign king. He did it in Nebuchadnezzar's life, and he's done it in yours.

[31 : 03] If you're here this morning, if you know Jesus, Lord and Savior, he's done it with you. Lives are changed by the power of God in every age, in the age of the Babylonian empire with Nebuchadnezzar and today, in every empire since.

He humbles the proud. He brings the arrogant down to the dust. He can do it. He did it with Nebuchadnezzar. He can do it to you. But I would urge you, I would plead with you this morning, don't let it get that far.

Humble yourself. Don't be so proud that you refuse to humble yourself of what you've heard even this morning. Far better to humble yourself now than risk being humbled by God later.

And he may never give you the chance. That's the message of the next chapter. Belshazzar, the next king, he had heard it all. He knew about the Lord God but refused to humble himself.

And for him, well, it was too late. You see, Nebuchadnezzar is right there in verse 37. Those who walk in pride, he is able to humble.

[32 : 12] humble. So let's both be encouraged and warned by Nebuchadnezzar's profoundly personal testimony. Encouraged that God is able to humble and bring to real faith even the most powerful of men.

Nebuchadnezzar was the leader of the known world, the most powerful man. And yet God is able to bring him low and bring him to real faith. God can do that.

Even your family member or friend who seems so hardened to the gospel, God can humble them. He is sovereign in salvation. It's in his hands, not yours.

So be encouraged. But also be warned. Be warned that those who refuse to humble themselves before God, he can humble. if you've heard the call of the gospel, repent, don't resist, don't harden yourself.

Because God can bring you that low in order to bring you to repentance. Don't let it get that far, repent today. Well, there's the profoundly personal testimony of a king.

[33 : 28] That's the first big thing we see in the passage. But the second thing, and much more briefly, we see that this chapter is piercingly polemic. We see here that God alone is sovereign, which means the powers of this world answer to him.

We need to ask the question, why is this chapter here in our Bibles? Why did the writer include this when he was putting together this book of Daniel? What was the key point he wanted his first readers to grasp?

Yes, we've seen the personal aspect of Nebuchadnezzar's testimony. But there is another point, I think, a bigger point. Now, the ability to emphasize your point for the modern writer is quite easy.

You just underline or put in bold a bit you want to draw someone's attention to. Or if you're really meaning your point, you capitalize, put it in bold, underline, exclamation mark. It's easy to do that, isn't it, on your computer?

But for the writer of Daniel, he couldn't do that. He was just writing on a parchment. But he emphasizes his key point through repetition.

[34 : 36] And it comes again and again and again in Daniel chapter 4, verses 17, 25, and 32. Look again with me at those verses. Verse 17, the dream is given 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.

Verse 25, Nebuchadnezzar is to be driven from men until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom he will.

Again, verse 32, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom he will. Again, and again, and again, the writer reiterates and hammers home the key idea.

God is the ruler of the kingdom of men. He alone is sovereign. And that is the truth that Nebuchadnezzar is forced to reckon with, and in the end confesses.

And that is the truth the writer wants his first readers and us to grasp. So two implications flowing from that big point. God alone is sovereign.

[35 : 50] He rules the kingdom of men. The first implication is personal. learn the lesson that Nebuchadnezzar took so long to learn.

Learn that God alone is supreme and sovereign. And that means that he is supreme and sovereign over your life and mine.

All of us are to some degree like Nebuchadnezzar wanting to do things our way, to be the recipients of praise and glory, refusing to acknowledge the God who gives us our every breath, thinking that we're the authors of our lives when in reality all is a gift.

But hear the repeated refrain of this chapter. The most high rules the kingdom of man. And so the same thing to do is to submit to him.

For that will be your salvation as it was for Nebuchadnezzar. Submit to him because he is the great king of the universe. He alone.

[36 : 57] What's the first implication? Second. The second implication is more polemical. Firmly in the sights of the writer of Daniel are the pagan rulers and religions of the day.

All through the opening chapter of the book, and including chapter 4, the pagan kings and religions and rulers are made out to look absolutely farcical. Just read through it later.

Every time the king reaches a crisis, the magicians are wheeled in, the astrologers, but every single time they have no answer. And every single time Daniel is brought in and he speaks the truth, he answers.

He's got the truth that the pagan religions don't. They look absolutely foolish every single time. The Jewish exiles in chapter 3, they refuse to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's ridiculous golden image.

They're thrown into the furnace, but they walk out unscathed. The God of Daniel is set against the total incompetence and ineffectiveness of the pagan powers of the day.

[38 : 05] They are totally powerless against the sovereign lord, the God of Daniel. Now the message to the first readers of Daniel, it was an appeal to them, that they wouldn't fall for the glitz and glamour of the pagan religions of the day or the impressiveness of the kings of the hour.

Sure, they looked impressive and powerful, but they were, in terms of the big picture, utterly empty, without power. There was another king. He reigned supreme.

So don't be sucked into their ways, says the writer. And he says the same to us today. See the pagan powers of today for what they really are. Daniel's God is our God and he has not changed.

He is still sovereign over the affairs of men. And that means that the pagan religions of our day, the horoscopes people consult, the gods of Eros that people pursue, the materialism that people are trapped in, they really have no answer to life's biggest questions.

The kings of today who rule over us, well they only rule at the pleasure of God. The most high rules the kingdom of men.

[39 : 22] That was true in Daniel's Babylon. It's true in Scotland today. So don't be cowed or intimidated by the rulers of our day.

There is a higher throne. And that's hard to grasp, isn't it? Because it doesn't look to be the case. It certainly didn't in Nebuchadnezzar's day, he looked to be the almighty supreme commander.

He was the great king. To your average onlooker, he was the ultimate sovereign, but there was a greater reality. There was then, and there is today.

The great Nebuchadnezzar, he was humbled by the living God. have you humbled yourself before him? The most high God rules the kingdom of man.

Nebuchadnezzar learned that the hard way. And so I'd urge you this morning to learn it the easy way. Our God reigns. Submit to him today, now.

[40 : 33] And if you have submitted him, be encouraged that he is on the throne. The powers we see answer to him. Our God reigns over the kingdom of man.

Amen. Let's pray. Our Father God, how encouraged we are to know, to hear again, that you are the great king.

All the kings of this earth answer to you. And each of us must answer to you too. So Lord, help us to learn Nebuchadnezzar's lesson, to submit to you.

Lord, help us to do that. How proud, how proud we often are. So Lord, help us to humble ourselves and help us too to trust you, because you are the great king.

and all the kings of this world are in your hand. So encourage our hearts this morning, for we ask it. In Jesus' name, Amen.