

GOD RULES OVER ALL: A CASE STUDY

(Daniel 4/Acts 4:23-28)

...Perhaps you heard that there is an election this week? From our standpoint, the outcome is still very unclear, and the lack of clarity is causing an unusual panic among many. This election is a serious matter and will have a far reaching affect for years; yet, do not think the outcome is merely by chance. Rest assured, the Lord is sovereign! He rules and reigns over the affairs of nations, and is purposely bringing about the coming of His earthly kingdom.

...Tucked away in the Old Testament is the story of history's greatest king, Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 4 records in the king's own words that God of Heaven is the great and only king.

...This text reminds us that God is sovereign, and does whatsoever He has planned and purposed to do. No matter what the outcome may be on Tuesday, be encouraged, be comforted, God reigns. His reign even included a Cross.

THREE OBSERVATIONS UPON A KING'S TESTIMONY REMINDING US THAT GOD RULES OVER ALL THE EARTH.

...God is sovereign over the moments of history bringing about His predetermined ending...the Kingdom of Christ!!

I. God Warned The King Through A Dream: Judgment Is Coming. (Daniel 4:1-18)

...This is another example of the mercy of God who often warns us of coming judgment. "Flee the wrath..."

- A. This unusual chapter in God's Word is written by the once pagan king. (vv1-3)
 - 1. The writing is in the form of a decree and opens and closes with praise to God.
 - 2. The decree is his testimony of God's work in his life. (How God humbled him...)
- B. This mighty king tells he had a dream that terrified him. (vv.4-18)
 - 1. He had been at home surrounded by security and prosperity. (A false security)
 - 2. His dream involved a huge tree that was cut down and stripped of its branches.
 - 3. Again, his academics could not tell the meaning of the dream. (Man's wisdom cannot...)
 - 4. Daniel, the chief academic, hears the king's God-given dream. (vv.8-18) "Cut down..."
...Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar knew the dream was bad news, and hesitated to ask Daniel?
...In any event, God was dealing with this great earthly king and warned him...

II. God Provided A Man That Knew God And Understood His Word. (vv.19-27)

...Daniel was about 50 years old at this time and had been in the aging king's court for 35 years.

...God had placed by His providence a man in the highest levels of the kingdom to serve Him.

- A. The dream devastated Daniel. (v.19) He had grown to be friends with the king...
 - 1. He felt the huge burden of God's message and yet, was faithful to deliver God's message of judgment to his friend the king.
 - 2. He approached the king with tact and gave him hope.
- B. God told the king through the dream that he would lose his kingdom for 7 years, and that God would reduce him to the likes of an animal. He would go insane, until he recognized the Lord God as the only Sovereign Who rules in the heavens and on the earth. (v.26)
 - 1. God was dealing with his great sin of pride. He thought more highly of himself and his accomplishments than he ought.
 - 2. There is no doubt that the city of Babylon was truly marvelous. Note:
 - 3. The good news, Daniel told him that at the end, he would receive back his kingdom.
- C. Daniel urged his friend, the king, to repent and thereby turn back this judgment. (v.27)

III. God Followed Through On His Word...Judgment Day Came! (vv.28-37/Acts 4)

...This reminds us that God's Word is absolutely sure, you can count on it.

- A. It happened, though God in His mercy waited a full year, but His warning went unheeded. ...Having achieved a new victory in Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar returned home filled with pride.
- B. God's judgment fell and the king instantly became animal-like. (v.33) ...When God wants to humble a man, He can do it quickly. Daniel took care of the kingdom...
- C. After 7 years, Nebuchadnezzar was converted. (v.34) What a change in him. Now he is praising the Lord of Heaven. Such are the fruits of regeneration. He died soon after this. (5:18-23)
- D. The Cross unfolds the same truth, God rules even through the evil intentions and actions of men. Men willfully killed "the Lord of glory," but through it provided the greatest possible gift. (Acts 4:23-28) "To do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place." (v.28)

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

1. This week consider fasting and prayer for God's mercy upon us as a nation who seem to have forgotten God, and then be sure to vote. Remember that God is on the throne always, even if and when "The foundations are being destroyed..." (Psalm 11:3-4)
2. Learn to love the reality of God's sovereignty...it will provide you with the deepest of comfort when all seems lost. It really never is, as the Lord is moving all things to the great day when Jesus will visibly reign as King of Kings and Lord of all. History is really "His-Story."
3. See the cross as the place of the greatest sin ever committed, and yet the place where the greatest good ever done was done. Only our Sovereign Lord could do such a thing. Give your highest praise to our great and glorious God.
4. Judgment day is coming for every man and woman. Have you prepared yourself for this day of reckoning? Jesus died a sinner's death and in His death provided for all the only way of escape from judgment and death. You must humble yourself, acknowledge your sin, turn from it, and receive Jesus as Savior and Lord. If you do, you will receive His righteousness and be accepted in heaven. Today?