

Title: **DANIEL—*God Rules***

Text: Daniel 4:24-26

Subject: *The Message of Daniel*

Introduction:

In the 4th chapter of Daniel we read of Nebuchadnezzar's troubling dream and the interpretation of it by God's servant, Daniel. Let's read verses 24-26 together.

(Dan 4:24-26) "This *is* the interpretation, O king, and this *is* the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: {25} That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. {26} And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule."

Sooner or latter all men will learn what God taught Nebuchadnezzar—"*The Most High ruleth...The heavens do rule.*" That is the message of the Book of Daniel—God rules. In fact, that is what the name Daniel means—God rules. The sooner we learn that fact and the more fully we are convinced of it, the better.

What does the Lord God mean for us to understand by this? **What does the Bible mean when it declares that God rules?** It means exactly what Nebuchadnezzar confessed once he was converted (Dan. 4:34-37).

(Dan 4:34-36) "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: {35} 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? {36} At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me."

Once a person learns that “the Most High ruleth,” he will gladly, extol, honor and worship him.

(Dan 4:37) "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

No one worships except those who worship at the feet of the Lord God almighty, the Most High, who rules the

universe absolutely, always, in all places, in all things, exactly as he will! What could be more comforting to our souls?—More cheering?—More inspiring?—More encouraging?

- God Most High, who rules the universe, is God who can sustain his people in the midst of horribly evil times, as we see in Daniel 1:1-21.
- Our great God who, from his lofty throne, gives kingdoms to men and takes them away, at his pleasure, as he will, for the good of his own elect (2:37; 4:28-33; 5:1-31).
- The God of glory, in whom we trust, intervenes in and sovereignly manipulates all the affairs of all creatures according to his wise, unalterable purpose, for the salvation of his elect and the glory of his own great name. Providence is but the unfolding of his purpose by a constant succession of miracles. “*He worketh sign and wonders in heaven and in earth*” (6:27).—He causes pagan kings to dream dreams and uses pagan witch-doctors to fetch his prophet to the king!—He uses a fiery furnace to establish his servants in the place where he is pleased to put them!—He uses a den of lions to exalt his servant!
- Yes, our great God shall establish his kingdom in this world, a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, using all the kingdoms of this world that seek to destroy his kingdom to establish it! And in the end, his kingdom shall be the instrument in his hands by which the

kingdoms of this world shall be crushed to pieces and annihilated.

Proposition: The Book of Daniel is all about the establishing of his kingdom in this world upon the foundation of his own Son's blood atonement and the everlasting triumph and glory of Christ his Son in and by his kingdom of grace.

Most people are convinced that the Book of Daniel is a book about future things and has very little to do with you and me and our present life situations.

Illustration: *The Question from the Postal Clerk*

True, both the Book of Daniel and its New Testament companion, the Book of Revelation, speak about future things. These two Books are remarkable in their symmetry and harmony. The book of Revelation explains the book of Daniel. The book of Daniel lays the foundation for the book of Revelation.

It is also true that the Book of Daniel is perfectly precise in its prophetic predictions. History has verified that fact indisputably. The seventy-weeks of Daniel 9, about which everyone has heard so much and understands so little, marked the exact time when our Savior would manifest himself.

- 483 years (69 weeks) after Artaxerxes' first decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus Christ was immersed by John the Baptist in the

Jordan River, and began to manifest himself to Israel.

- Seven years later, (490 years after Artaxerxes' decree), at the end of Daniel's 70th week, the city was destroyed, exactly as Daniel declared.

But this is much, much more than a Book of prophecy. The Lord God raised Daniel during the Babylonian captivity for a specific purpose, to fulfil a specific need, and to do a specific work. God raised up Daniel to turn the hearts of his people away from their woes to their Savior. He raised up Daniel to show them that he was still on his throne, that his kingdom was safe, and that no real harm would ever befall them. Daniel was inspired to give a prophetic picture of redemption by Christ, setting the exact time in which it would be accomplished. He showed that God's purpose of grace included chosen sinners from among the Gentiles, that his kingdom is a spiritual kingdom reaching throughout the world, a kingdom built upon the sin-atonement sacrifice, death, and resurrection glory of the Messiah, the Christ. He declared that the ultimate accomplishment of God's purpose (the destruction of his enemies, the salvation of his people, and the everlasting glory of his Son) would, in the very last day of time, be the resurrection of the dead (Dan. 12:1-3).

(Dan 12:1-3) "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same

time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. {2} And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. {3} And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

Daniel's message is a message of hope, encouragement, and consolation. Though wickedness ever increases, though opposition to our God, his Son, his gospel and his people grows with unabated rage, all is well.—Our God is on his throne.—“*The Most High ruleth...The heavens do rule!*” Our Savior is always triumphant, and we who are more than conquerors in him, shall triumph at last over all things.—The kingdom of our God cannot be destroyed.—His church shall prevail.—The gates of hell shall never prevail over the bulwarks of Zion!

CHRIST AND ANTICHRIST

The Book of Daniel, as I have indicated, deals with nations and wars, specifically identifying the rise and fall of kings and kingdoms, but these nations and their kings all opposing our God, all opposing Christ and his kingdom, the church of God declares, as does the Book of Revelation, the sure and certain triumph Christ over antichrist, the sure and certain triumph of God's church over Babylon, the full redemption and salvation of

God's elect and the everlasting glory of Christ. Let me show you.

In **chapter 2** Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. In his dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw the image of a man. The head was made of gold, the chest and arms of silver, the stomach and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet and toes of iron mixed with clay. As Nebuchadnezzar looked, a rock was cut out, not by human hands, and thrown at the image, striking its feet. This rock then grew into a huge mountain that filled the earth.

The meaning of this vision is given in verse 44.

(Dan 2:44) "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

There must be a series of kingdoms in the earth, ruled according to man's ways, idolatrous and ungodly. But, ultimately, God's kingdom shall reduce them all to dust and fill the whole earth. The kingdoms of this world must crumble, but the kingdom of God would endure forever (Rev. 11:15).

(Rev 11:15) "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

THE OTHER VISIONS

I do not want to over simplify the Book, but all the rest of the visions in Daniel elaborate on this. Two rulers and two kingdoms are constantly presented. There is a lawful Ruler, to whom God himself has given and is giving authority, glory, and the kingdom (7:9-14).

(Dan 7:9-14) "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire. {10} A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. {11} I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. {12} As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. {13} I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. {14} And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."

- The Ancient of Days is our God.
- The Son of Man is our all-glorious Christ to whom he has given all dominion and glory.
- Daniel refers Christ as the Prince of princes (8:25), the Anointed One (9:25), and Michael (12:1).

Then Daniel tells us of another ruler who must rise, a rebel ruler, who rises in the time of the end in vehement opposition to Christ (8:23-25). This is the antichrist described in Revelation 13, not a single man, but the whole system of false religion represented by four different beasts, all freewill, works religion, Satan masquerading as Jesus Christ.

(Dan 8:23-25) "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. {24} And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. {25} And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."

God's elect, the heirs of his kingdom, bow to the rule of Christ (7:27). They will not accept the mark of the beast. They will not worship at Satan's altar.

(Dan 7:27) "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

All the rest of the world follow the beast and are in league with hell against Christ and his kingdom (8:23; 9:26), sometimes they use peaceful, flattering words (11:21, 32, 34), but their opposition is undaunted.

(Dan 8:23) "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up."

(Dan 9:26) "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

References to the rebel ruler include the little horn that comes from the direction of the north (8:9), the stern-faced king (8:23), the "*ruler who will come*" (9:26), the ruler who sets up the abomination that causes desolation (9:27), and the king of the north (11:31), and the king who exalts himself (11:36).

The conflict between these two rulers comes to a head in the time of the end, when the world as a whole passes

the point of no return in its rebellion against the Son of God (8:23), causing great devastation. Perhaps this refers to that age when Satan is loosed for a little season (Rev. 20) to deceive the nations. It certainly refers to this day in which we live.

(Dan 8:23-24) "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. {24} And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people."

The "*daily sacrifice*," or continual ministry of Christ on by which the world is now preserved from judgment (Rev. 7:1-3) comes to an end (8:11-12; 11:31; 12:11), and in its place is set up the abomination that causes desolation (9:27).

(Dan 8:11-12) "Yea, he magnified *himself* even to the prince of the host, and by him the *daily sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. {12} And an host was given *him* against the *daily sacrifice* by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered."

(Dan 9:27) "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it*

desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

(Dan 11:31) "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."

(Dan 12:11) "And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days."

In the time of the end, the saints of God will be severely persecuted, even to the point of death, and their power will be broken (8:24; 11:33; 12:7).

(Dan 8:24) "And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people."

(Dan 11:33) "And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, *many* days."

(Dan 12:7) "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that *it shall be* for a time,

times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished."

Antichrist will take his stand against Christ (8:25). But our Savior and King, the Lord Jesus Christ shall rise to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom (Babylon shall fall!) and deliver the saints (8:25; 9:27; 12:1).

(Dan 8:25) "And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."

(Dan 9:27) "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

(Dan 12:1) "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL—

The Lord Jesus Christ shines forth brilliantly in these twelve chapters. He is the **Smiting Stone** of Daniel 2:44,45. God's Son is the One who shall come to destroy Gentile dominion. It is He whose kingdom "*shall stand forever.*"

Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fiery furnace and saw **one like unto the Son of God** (3:25). He did not know of whom he spoke, but this was, no doubt, a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus.

What a majestic scene in chapter 7! **The Ancient of days, God the Father**, is seated upon his throne. The time setting is immediately before the return of Christ to establish His kingdom. We read, "*I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days...*" (7:13). The verses that follow are paralleled by the description of Christ in Revelation 5:1-7. "*And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed*" (Dan 7:14,15).

In **chapter 6**, the great dilemma which perplexed Darius, is a beautiful illustration of the gospel. (How could Darius both keep his law and deliver Daniel?—How can God be just and the Justifier?)

Daniel 9 foretells the death of Christ and the accomplishments of it.

(Dan 9:24) "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

- finish the transgression
- make an end of sins
- make reconciliation for iniquity
- bring in everlasting righteousness
- to seal up the vision and prophecy
- to anoint the most Holy

Chapter 9 also gives us, by Daniel's example, a tremendous word of instruction about prayer.

- Prayer involves the confession of sin.
- Prayer celebrates God's perfection.
- Prayer is based upon God's righteousness.
- Prayer seeks God's mercy.
- Our supplications are answered before we make them (9:23).
- The answer is found in Christ, always in Christ and in the revelation of God's grace and glory in him (9:24-27).

A QUESTION

The question might be asked, “Why does God put his people through such heavy, heavy trials?” One answer to that question is found in chapter 11 (v. 35).

(Dan 11:35) "And *some* of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make *them* white, *even* to the time of the end: because *it is* yet for a time appointed."

(1 Cor 11:19) "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

- Our trials will do us no harm. The fiery furnace only consumed the cords that bound Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
- Our trial are for a set time.
- Our trials will only make us better.

Application: Dare to be a Daniel!

- We must never compromise the name and honor our God and the gospel of his grace (Aniel in chapters 1 and 6).
- We must not bow down to the gods of this world, regardless of cost or consequence. “*We will not serve thy god!*”

Now, let me show you how this whole thing is going to end (Rev. 19:1-6)

(Rev 19:1-6) "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: {2} For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. {3} And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. {4} And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. {5} And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. {6} And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

¹ Date: Tuesday Evening—September 16, 2003
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Readings: *Bob Poncer & Bobbie Estes*