

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

## *You Must be Born Again!*

***“The Christian Church is not a moral agency. She is a regenerating agency. There are many moral agencies; the Church is not, she is supernatural, she is divine, she is filled with the Spirit; she converts men, she regenerates men, she is used of God to do it. The Church does not exist to produce good men. The Church exists to produce new men! You can be a good man without being a Christian at all.” [Martyn Lloyd Jones]***

[www.sermonaudio.com/crc](http://www.sermonaudio.com/crc)

[www.unholycharade.com](http://www.unholycharade.com) (blog)

[www.lightfordarktimes.com](http://www.lightfordarktimes.com) (blog)

Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

## ***He is Able to Humble Those who Walk in Pride***

***December 8th, 2024***

**Sermon Text:** Daniel 4

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 10

This morning we return to Babylon, six centuries before Christ, where Daniel, his 3 friends, and other Jews were in captivity under King Nebuchadnezzar. You will recall that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter we

have the account of the king erecting a huge golden statue – most probably of himself – and commanding all the people to bow down and worship it when the great orchestra began to play. It would be very interesting, would it not, if we could know what piece of music they played – some kind of Babylon national anthem I suppose. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused and were thrown into that blazing fiery furnace where they were joined by most probably the Lord Jesus

Christ – one like a son of the gods, as the king put it.

Now, that chapter ended this way:

Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.” Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. (Dan 3:28-30)

It sounds as if the king had been humbled – but as we are about to see, his humbling was shallow and short-lived.

This fourth chapter is remarkable in that here, in holy scripture, we have a chapter which consists entirely of the words of this pagan king. Daniel, who wrote this book, apparently added it into his narrative and thus endorsed its truthfulness and inspired nature. This is one of the section of Daniel that was written in Aramaic rather than in Hebrew.

Assyrian and Babylonian kings regarded themselves as kings of the entire world- and to some extent this was true. The king here addresses his testimony to “all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth.” He had addressed his decree in chapter 3 to the same audience, but now his purpose is entirely different. He writes in order to “show the signs and wonders that the Most High God” had done for him. This chapter then is a most remarkable portion of Scripture, and it may well be that we will one day see King Nebuchadnezzar in heaven.

Dan 4:1-3 King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and

languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! (2) It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. (3) How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

We see immediately a startling change in the King's tone. When he erected his golden image, his intent was to deny the truth of his previous dream where, you remember, he was depicted as the head of gold, only to one day be replaced by another kingdom, and then another and another, until the kingdom of God put an end to all earthly kingdoms and the King of kings reigns. But Nebuchadnezzar wasn't having it – his image was entirely of gold. Of HIS kingdom there would be no end! Here however, he confesses –

*“His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to*

*generation.”* This is the truth which he now desires to proclaim to the whole world.

How many rulers down through the centuries since Daniel's time have insisted that their dynasty would never end? Driven by a self-glorifying intent they insisted – and still do today – that they are building an everlasting kingdom?

This same foolish and godless arrogance can easily infect the rulers and people of our own nation, can it not? America is not forever! Even in comparison to other world empires in history, the history of America is extremely brief. The Roman Empire, for example, reigned over the world for how many years – 500? The Holy Roman Empire lasted about 1000 years. But they all eventually came to an end, and so it continues today – the rise and the fall. There is only ONE kingdom that is forever, and that is the kingdom of God whose King is Christ.

Let's read on then and hear how God humbled this boastful king and how this chapter of Scripture is

an absolutely vital one for and king or President to learn.

### The Dream

Dan 4:4-18 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.

(6) 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, 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—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.

(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. (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.

(17) The sentence 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.'

(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."

The king was "at ease in his house and prospering in his palace." Everything was going his way. Free from care, content and secure.

"The tree grew and became strong, its height was great, its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant." All of this language from his dream describes how he was "prospering in his palace."

Such times are dangerous for all of us, and particularly so for a ruler. For a rich man. As John Bunyan pointed out in *The Holy War*, Satan's favorite tactic is to come at just such times and use "the gunpowder of pride" to destroy.

***We need to be regularly praying for President Trump and everyone in his new administration, that the Lord would protect them from this terrible danger of pride.***

1Ti 2:1-2 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, (2) for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

The dream was remarkable. It shook the king with fear and alarm.

It was, of course, the Lord visiting him – no ordinary dream. And as he had done before in chapter 2, he orders all the wise men to come and tell him what it meant. They could not of course, but then Daniel came.

Now, Nebuchadnezzar’s pagan theology is evidenced in verse 8 –

Dan 4:8 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—and I told him the dream, saying,

He still doesn’t get it. His idea of deity is one of polytheism. Babylon must have had a kind of pantheon of gods at the top of which was Nebuchadnezzar’s god. And yet even at this point he was forced to confess that it is in Daniel that “the spirit of the holy gods” is found.

Why did the king not bypass all of his other conjurers and call for Daniel immediately? He surely still remembered that it was Daniel alone who interpreted his first

dream, so why this delay? John Calvin suggests that it could have been for this reason – that the king realized his dream was about *him*. And he wanted to hear an interpretation that would be in his favor – knowing however that it was Daniel alone who would tell him the truth, a truth that meant trouble for him.

*“We gather that no one comes to the true God, unless impelled by necessity.”* [Calvin]

NOTE: Think of King Ahab and the prophet Micaiah whom he hated because he always spoke truth

So Nebuchadnezzar relates his dream to Daniel. Here is this great, huge, flourishing tree which all the earth looked to. And then, into the scene comes this “watcher, a holy one from heaven, who makes a loud proclamation –

*“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.”*

The destruction would not be entire, however. A stump was to be left, though bound with a band of iron and bronze.

And then the watcher's language takes a curious turn: *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.* You see it. The tree is a HIM, a person.

And apparently in the dream the watcher tells Nebuchadnezzar the purpose of these things:

Dan 4:17 The sentence 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.'

Here is the lesson, you see. And it is a lesson for us. When we see God blessing a nation and raising up a

ruler whose reign is a blessing to all – even to all the world – *we must always remember-*

***“The Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.”***

This is why I have chosen to bring to you the lessons of this book of Daniel at this time. All the recent blessings we have seen in our nation in which we have been delivered from a continuing reign of evil and perhaps even another world war, are the work of the Lord. And our new President and his administration *are nothing in themselves – they are apart from the Lord the lowliest of men. He has entrusted them with His authority, but they and we ourselves must NEVER fall into pride over this.* Israel was the lowliest of all the nations, yet in their pride they forgot the Lord and He removed His blessing from them. That is what He would do with King Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel's Reluctance to Tell the King

Dan 4:19-27 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. 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!

(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.

(23) 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: 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 from the time that you know that Heaven rules. (27) 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.”

In verse 19 we see a principle that certainly applies directly to us as Christians living in a fallen world. Much like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, for instance, Daniel was shocked and grieved when he realized that God’s judgment was about to fall upon this king in whose kingdom Daniel lived. We want God to bless America, but we also know that God does not indefinitely bless an unrepentant, sinful nation. Only a fool rejoices when the nation in which he lives comes under judgment and destruction. Apparently there are many such fools today in this nation who seem to delight in America not being great.

But this is not to be the attitude of the Christian. We desire good for our country, just as Daniel desired God’s blessing on Nebuchadnezzar. And so he pleaded with the king – “break off

you sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.”

Just as the entire world was blessed by God’s blessing upon Babylon, so as we are seeing, the whole world is blessed when God blesses our own nation. The other nations of the world recognize this. It is all of God’s doing – not because of anything in us. He could have chosen another nation. But at this time in history, He has chosen America – *and we must be very careful to give Him the glory and praise for it, not yielding to the temptation of the devil which is pride. God wants us to be a blessing to the oppressed and to do what is right.*

***The greatest danger facing our nation, our leaders, and our people is PRIDE. It is the terrible sin of failing to acknowledge and give thanks to God, recognizing that we ourselves are the lowliest of people.***

Only fools, therefore, hate America and desire its demise. We must be Daniels and remind our fellow citizens and our leaders to always give glory to God. And we must always, as Christian people who know the Lord and who know these truths which we are seeing right here in Scripture, seek for the good and welfare of our nation and therefore the good of all other nations.

### The King Falls to Pride

Dan 4:28-33 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. (29) At the end of twelve months 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 I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?” (31) 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, (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.” (33) Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

We are in great trouble as a nation if our leaders ever come to this – *“Is not this great America, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence for the glory of my majesty?”* And heaven's axe fell.

Now, Babylon was indeed great. I am not an archaeology expert at all but I suspect that such experts could tell us about just how amazing Babylon was. You have heard of the Seven Wonders of the World and if I recall, the hanging gardens of Babylon were one of the seven. Let's call on Wikipedia for help-

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World listed by Hellenic culture. They were described as a remarkable feat of engineering with an ascending series of tiered gardens containing a wide variety of trees, shrubs, and vines, resembling a large green mountain constructed of mud bricks. It was said to have been built in the ancient city of Babylon, near present-day Hillah, Babil province, in Iraq. The Hanging Gardens' name is derived from the Greek word κρεμαστός (kremastós, lit. 'overhanging'), which has a broader meaning than the modern English word "hanging" and refers to trees being planted on a raised structure such as a terrace.

According to one legend, the Hanging Gardens were built alongside a grand palace known as The Marvel of Mankind, by King Nebuchadnezzar II (who ruled between 605 and 562 BC), for his Median wife, Queen Amytis, because she missed the green hills and valleys of her homeland. This was attested to by

the Babylonian priest Berossus, writing in about 290 BC, a description that was later quoted by Josephus.

So there he was, perhaps looking at those very gardens, but this was not all –

“From archaeology we learn that Nebuchadnezzar was primarily not a warrior, but a builder. In the famous East India House Inscription, for example, the king relates how he renovated the two temples of Marduk in Babylon, and of Nebo in Borsippa. He then declares how he restored 15 other temples in Babylon and completed the two great walls of the city, adding a large rampart. Then he rebuilt the palace of Nabopolassar and in only 15 days constructed a palace with which was connected the famous hanging gardens.”  
[Geneva Commentary, Daniel, by Edward Young]

Greatly blessed and used by the Lord, and yet what a terrible danger he was in. And it is a terrible danger for every single one of us.

“All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar” – which is to say “all of this came upon ME because I did not listen to Daniel.” One year later the dream came about. “Is not this great Babel which I have build by MY mighty power...for the glory of MY majesty.”

*“While the words were still in his mouth...”*

What did he think when he heard that voice from heaven? *“The kingdom has departed from you...until you know that the Most High rules.”*

What was the form of this judgment? It must have been this:

***Nebuchadnezzar in his pride was refusing to glorify God. He was living as if God were irrelevant. And so the Lord showed him what he was without God. God removed His image from Nebuchadnezzar and the king became a beast.***

And that is what is true of every one of us. God created man *in His image*. This was not true of any

other “beast of the field.” Only of man does Genesis say he was created in the image of God. That is the only thing that separates us from beasts.

You see this increasingly today. People who are beastly. From whom God has withdrawn His presence:

Rom 1:24-32 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, (25) because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

(26) For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; (27) and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their

error. (28) And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. (29) They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, (30) slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, (31) foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (32) Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

And so, here was the once powerful and majestic king - *He was driven from among men and ate grass 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 birds' claws.* I suggest to you that this is largely a description of an increasing number of people around us today.

But there are also beastly people who live in mansions – yet they are savage and unloving – beastly. Without conscience. And all because of that same root sin – arrogant pride which glorifies self instead of the Lord.

### The King is Brought to His Senses

I have often thought that these are some of the most wonderful verses in the Bible:

Dan 4:34-37 At 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?” (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.

Are you a Christian? Do you know the Lord? This great confession of Nebuchadnezzar is a summary of truth which every one of Christ's true people confesses. And which, if the Lord is going to bless America, our leaders will always confess every single day.

***And He is able to humble those who walk in pride.***