

PP God's (un)Secret Identity: Our God is Sovereign

Part 8 Our God is Sovereign, so let us bow before Him Daniel 4:28-37

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Orlando Magic's center, Jonathon Isaac became the first NBA player this season who would not kneel during the National Anthem or wear a Black Lives Matter shirt

Grilled by the media, vilified by many, he gave his reason why: *"I don't think kneeling or putting*

on a T-shirt for me personally is the answer. I feel like for me Black lives are supported through the gospel. All lives are supported through the gospel. We all have things that we

do wrong...We all fall short of God's glory. Whoever will humble themselves and seek God and repent of their sins, we can see our mistakes and people's mistakes and evil in a different light. Racism isn't the only thing that plagues our society, our nation, our world."

I'm not sharing this for political reasons, or as an indictment on BLM or kneeling at events

It's because of what happened just hours later as the Magic played the Kings, and he laid on the hardwood floor in pain with an injury that will take him out of the game for a year, and dampen his hope of renegotiating his rookie contract for a lucrative deal

As he was laying there clutching his knee, I wonder what may have been going through his mind *God, I stood for the gospel, I spoke to the world of Jesus Christ, I risked my image, my brand, my reputation for your glory...why did you allow this to happen to me?*

He might not get an answer to those questions, but there is an attribute of God that can bring peace into his troubled soul should he lack it: the sovereignty of God

As we turn to Daniel 4, we will see a prideful man come to grips with the sovereignty of God

We begin at **Daniel 4:28**, ***"All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar"***, and immediately sense that we stepped into the middle of an ongoing story

Daniel was a Jewish teen when he was forcibly taken to Babylon by king Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful ruler in the world at that time

Yet God gave Daniel favor, and along with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, they were *'ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers that were in all his kingdom.'* **(1:20)**

Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream and he couldn't sleep, so he commanded his wise men to not only tell him what the dream was without being told, but to also interpret it

If they couldn't, they would all die being torn limb from limb, and their houses destroyed

Daniel made an appointment with the king, and told him the dream, and also the interpretation

Nebuchadnezzar praised the God of Daniel, and Daniel got a job promotion, along with his 3 friend

But the king couldn't shake his pride, so he built a 90' high golden statue in his image, put together a worship band, and commanded everyone to bow down and worship him

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refuse, the king furiously threw them into furnace, but there in the midst along with them, was Jesus, blazing brighter than the flames, protecting them

Again, Nebuchadnezzar praised God, and promoted the three Jewish believers

Chapter 4 opens on one of the greatest sections of praise and worship in the bible as the king of Babylon gives glory to the Most High God, brading of Him to the whole world

But with peace and prosperity abounding he had another bad dream, and it shakes him to the core. None of his wise men could interpret the dream, so he calls for Daniel and he interprets it. In **4:24**, Daniel tells him that the interpretation was a *‘decree of the Most High’* that was coming against Nebuchadnezzar, because he had forgotten that *‘the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom He will’* **4:25**

The king just could not get the pride and desire for personal glory out of his heart

PP *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”* Proverbs 16:18

And neither can we without the grace of God, and one of the antidotes to our demand for everyone to bow down and serve us, is to know the sovereignty of our God

God was about to break Nebuchadnezzar’s pride, and we get a front row seat to see it happen

PP 1-Pride makes us stand tall

A year goes by after Daniel interpreted that dream, and even here is a principle you can count on:

PP *God will graciously warn before He disciplines*

God warned Nebuchadnezzar in **4:27**, *‘break off your sins by practicing righteousness’*

There is still time to repent, for God longs to bless, not bring destruction

But the king ignored the warning, so one day *“he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, 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?’”* **28-30**

Babylon was truly a great city, massive really, spanning the Euphrates River

One Greek historian who lived 130 years after Daniel, wrote that the city was square, the walls along each side traveled 14 miles, in total 56 miles, over 11 times the size of Allentown

Around the city was a broad moat of water, then came two walls, the first one 25’ thick and the second one 23’ with a rubble-filled space between

Inside the walls were the hanging gardens, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world

Saddam Hussein once offered 1.5 million to anyone who could figure out how Nebuchadnezzar watered his terraced gardens, reportedly hundreds of feet above the Euphrates River

It was an amazing city, and its glory went to the heart of the king and he proclaimed his majesty

This is an autopsy report of a spiritual heart filled to the brim with pride

And notice his counsel was his own, he lived in his own bubble of sovereignty, unaccountable

“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’ **4:31**

He would look and live like a beast of the field for 7 years, **4:32**, *“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.”* **Daniel 4:31-32**

He is what any of us would be if God pulled away all of His grace and let our hearts run amok

Each of us would be like a brute beast if our sinful flesh reigned unopposed

It is where humanity was in **PP** **Genesis 6:5**, *“The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*

This is the wicked people called the Amalekites who repeatedly attacked the people of Israel without provocation on their Exodus journey; they were irredeemably set in their ways. It is the moral depravity of those who take children and sell them into the sex industry, those who

riot night after night mindlessly destroying all in their sight. It's the ruler who can no longer discern right from wrong, and the despot who crushes his people. Humility begins when we consent to the truth that if not for the grace of God, there is no level of depravity we would not descend to. And it was humility that finally blossomed in the heart of this beast of a king, as finally he stopped looking down on all in pride, but looked up to God in humility:

PP 2-God's sovereignty makes us bow before Him

I don't know any Christian who doesn't believe that God is sovereign. But I know many who haven't really thought through what that means, and some who struggle with its implications when they do. God declared **PP** *"I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish."* Isaiah 46:9-10 (NLT2)

PP God's sovereignty means He is enthroned above all powers, and always does what He pleases, bringing all things into accordance with His purpose and will.

PP *"For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps."* Ps 135:5-6

So to say that God is sovereign is to acknowledge that God is free to do what He pleases, and to love Him is to gladly submit to Him as your rightful King.

And it is where Nebuchadnezzar came to, after 7 long years of pride-induced madness:

"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; 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?'...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."

4:34-35, 37

God is the rightful King and His dominion endures forever, and He does according to His will, whatever He pleases, and no one can rightfully question why.

You will know that you are Beholding your God, when you look up, and exalt His place, affirming that He has the power and right to bring all things into conformity to His purpose and will.

I close with a magnificent look at the sovereignty of God from Acts 27, as Paul was a prisoner on a ship sailing for Rome, and a fierce storm came up them, 276 passengers.

God had sent an angel to tell Paul that not one of them would die, but then the ship struck a reef and the ship broke apart.

Yet every person, swimming or clinging to broken pieces of the ship made it safely to shore
That is God's sovereignty...His power to bring all of His purposes to pass, all that He desires
As Jonathon Isaac of the Orlando Magic laid on that hardwood floor clutching his torn knee, he
was faced with a choice: *Will I trust my sovereign God in everything, and serve Him
faithfully, even when difficulty comes?*

Will you do the same, will I do the same when we encounter life's storms?

Perhaps you need to come to God right now, clinging to the broken pieces of your life, and bow
your heart before Him, and submit to your sovereign God

May God's grace enable us to yield to the King of all kings and trust Him, no matter what
Amen?

Pray