

# God Ruling the World- Nigeria

It's good to be here again, thank you for inviting me. I greatly desire for God to move in this community. The way God moves, is by us having a greater vision of who He is. When we exalt God, when we magnify Him and declare Him to be as great as He is, when we realize who we are, that's how we change and grow in the Lord. That's how we shine forth the gospel to the nations and to the community that we are in and in our families. Tonight I wanted to talk through Daniel 4, because it's an amazing story God put in the middle of Daniel that demonstrates His power in the affairs of men. There's always things going on that make us question His power. My understanding is that there has been terrorism close to hear, we need to see that through the light of God controlling all things. Before we talk about that, I want to declare how God controls all things. When you get to Daniel 4, it's about Nebuchadnezzar. In Daniel 2, there is a picture of a statue and the head on that statue is made out of gold. There are later kingdoms that come after him that are represented on that statue, but Nebuchadnezzar is that head of gold. What we need to realize, is there was no king greater than Nebuchadnezzar other than Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the perfect King. Nebuchadnezzar is called the king of kings, lord of lords. When Jesus Christ talks about what the kingdom of God looks like, how it's this tree that grows up and the birds nest in its branches and the beasts go under its shade, that's from Daniel 4 in the description of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar is a king unlike any human king and God wanted to prove that He was sovereign over all things. Nebuchadnezzar is writing to the world. It says in verse 1, "Nebuchadnezzar the king, to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you." Nebuchadnezzar was a pagan king. Think of all the worst aspects of all the religions of the world and Nebuchadnezzar practiced that. His heart was as much against God as anyone in the history of the world, but Daniel 4 is a letter written to every tribe, every tongue, every nation. This is the first time the gospel goes to the whole world since the time of the flood and God does that primarily by saying He is in control of all things. So Nebuchadnezzar writes to every tribe and tongue and nation and he starts with, "Peace be multiplied to you". When this story starts he doesn't know the gospel, but when the story ends he knows the gospel. He doesn't know the name Jesus Christ, but he understands that God rules, he understands that God is the King and he understands peace comes from God. When he tells them, "Peace be multiplied to you", he is saying may the gospel go forth. This was the man who conquered all the nations, he conquered all these languages, they were his subjects. After God humbles him, he proclaims the gospel to the whole world. This happened hundreds of years before the book of Acts, but it also happened hundreds of years after Israel was commanded to preach the gospel to the world. God takes this pagan man who is in rebellion to God and He takes him and turns him around so he is the preacher of the gospel to the world. So this is the story of his salvation and in his introduction to the letter in verse 2 he says, "I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me." When we find out who God is, when we repent and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, our duty and our desire is to declare who Christ is to those around us, especially to those who are under our authority. One of the most basic signs that someone is a Christian is that they declare who Christ is to their children. If a father doesn't care to declare who Christ is to his children, they don't really have an idea who Christ is. When you see the magnificence of God, when you see the severity of the punishment He pours out on those who are in rebellion to Him, how can you not tell your children about it? The

most basic response to the gospel is to tell other people, especially those who are under your authority. Nebuchadnezzar has the whole world under his authority so he declares this to the whole world. Notice in verse 3, "How great *are* His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion *is* from generation to generation." Here is the man who rules the known world, this is the man that God calls the king of kings, but what he says is, no, God is the true King. Do you say that? Do you say that God is the true King? Do you say that He is the true Lord? What is the most basic thing a king does, what's the most basic thing that someone who rules over you does? They make the rules. To say Jesus Christ is your King, means that you say Jesus Christ makes the rules for my life. Do you say Jesus Christ makes the rules for my life? It's easy to honor God with your lips, it has always been a problem with the people who claim God is their King. They honor Him with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. How do you know where your heart is? It's whether you treat Him as King, whether you treat Him as the Law Giver. As it says in 1 John, for this is the love of God, to keep His commandments. Nebuchadnezzar, who has been given all this authority by God, he says 'God is my King, I don't rule over God'. What do you say? Do you say you are going to make your own rules or do you say you are going to follow God's rules? Do you even know God's rules? God's rules are in Deuteronomy, God's rules are in Leviticus, some in Exodus. He has given us the rules by which we are to live our lives. In Matthew 5, when Jesus Christ is preaching the Sermon on the Mount, He says He did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. In other words, to do every single aspect of it. He says He's not wiping out the cup, He is filling the cup to the brim. Do you believe Jesus Christ is your King? Do you see Him as Nebuchadnezzar sees Him? Then Nebuchadnezzar goes through an explanation and describes how he comes to this point. He talks about how he had this dream of this tree that grew up and the birds nested and the beasts are under its shade and then it gets cut down and a metal band is put around it, then all of a sudden it grows back. He doesn't know what's going on, he can't understand so he calls everyone in the kingdom who is supposed to be a wise man and none of them can answer. So he probably goes to the person who he knew could answer even before he called the others, and that was Daniel. Daniel, who interpreted his dream about the statue. Daniel, whose friends had been thrown in the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar didn't want to know who God was, he had seen the power with Daniel being able to know what would happen over the next centuries. He didn't want to know who God was because he saw these men standing in the fire and he had done everything he could to judge them. He literally creates a picture of hell, he builds a fire that is seven times hotter, he says he is god who can cast people into hell and God says, 'No you're not' They walked in the midst of the fire and weren't burned, they didn't even smell of the flames. Nebuchadnezzar understood God was God and he believed that, but he didn't have saving faith. Saving faith means you have to not only believe God as God, but you have to submit to Him. Nebuchadnezzar knew God could stop someone from being burned and that He was more powerful, but he still said he didn't want to hear from Him. When he can't get an answer from anyone else he goes to Daniel because he knows who Daniel serves. Always remember that people don't want to know who God is. Jesus Christ says to know who God is means you have to die to yourself. Nebuchadnezzar didn't want to die to himself, but he was so tormented by the dream that he goes and asks Daniel anyway because he does know that God is the One who rules in heaven and on the earth. Then He reveals the dream to Daniel and in verse 12, He uses this description about the beast in the field under the tree. He goes through the rest of the dream and he gets to this part, "And let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from that of a man, Let him be given

the heart of a beast, And let seven times pass over him.” God was going to take Nebuchadnezzar and make him into an animal. The most powerful person in the world, so much so that nobody else is even close to having as much power as he had. You look at all the kingdoms that come afterwards, the Greek, Roman and Medio-Persian emperors had nowhere near as much power as Nebuchadnezzar. God made Nebuchadnezzar eat grass like an ox. Never think that there’s some earthly power that can resist God. Not Boko Haram, not the Fulani, not somebody who is abusing you and taking advantage of you, not someone who is stealing from you or oppressing you. God can stop Nebuchadnezzar. There is nobody on this world who can resist God. Last year when I was here I taught on the fear of God and this is an example of why we should fear God rather than fearing any man. If there was any man in all of history to fear, it would be Nebuchadnezzar and God says to Nebuchadnezzar that He is going to make him eat grass for seven years. He says specifically why in verse 17, “This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.” God gave this story to us and caused these things to happen so that when we see the Fulani attack we don’t fear the Fulani. We say, ‘God, why did You send the Fulani?’ The terrorism that you are experiencing needs to point you to a greater fear of God. God caused this to happen 2,400 years ago so you could know that God rules in the affairs of man, so that you can respond rightly when horrible things happen around you. That you can respond not by falling down before the Fulani, but by falling down before the Living God. If God can make Nebuchadnezzar eat grass like an ox and live off it for seven years, there is nobody who is withstanding God. Nobody withstands God. God put this in His Word so that we would know and live by the fact that God rules in the kingdom of men.

Nebuchadnezzar found that out the hard way, he had to eat grass like an ox for seven years. The rains of heaven fell down upon him, he lived outside, his nails grew like eagle’s claws, his hair became so matted it became like feathers. Don’t require that before you say God rules in the affairs of men. The easy way to learn that is from Daniel 4. The hard way to learn that is to continue to fear everything else instead of fearing God. Fear God, that’s where peace is. When Nebuchadnezzar says, ‘Peace be multiplied to all the nations”, he has learned the lesson I am trying to exhort you to believe tonight. Fear God, don’t fear man. Ask yourself what God is doing; not what men are doing. Put on the mind of Christ, think about the world the way God thinks about the world. He doesn’t wonder what the Fulani are doing, He says He is a good Father, He says He is training His children, He says He is chastising His children. Look at it through the lens of who God is, not through the lens of how the world looks at it. Continuing through Daniel 4, verse 19. I want you to consider Daniel’s response to what he hears about what will happen to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel has been taken to prison by Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed his homeland three times. Nebuchadnezzar brought the Jews into captivity, but Daniel did not say, ‘Ha! Nebuchadnezzar gets what he deserves.’ “Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. So the king spoke, and said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.” Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!” Even though Nebuchadnezzar had done all these things to the Jews, Daniel was mournful over the fact that the Jews were in captivity, but he still had sympathy for Nebuchadnezzar. This is also what true faith looks like, we have sympathy for those who are still enslaved by their sin. Even when they affect us, our response is not anger, our response is pity because in the end, unless they repent they will suffer eternal

damnation. Our response is not to say, 'Ha! Good! My enemies will suffer!', it is to have sympathy because we recognize what God did for us, He opened our eyes to see who God truly is. When God opens our eyes, when He gives us ears to hear and a heart to understand, that is how we repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. God says He will show mercy to who He will show mercy. He says those who have received the mercy of God desire mercy for others and Daniel desires mercy for Nebuchadnezzar. He goes on and explains the dream, how Nebuchadnezzar would bring peace to all the nations. Before that all the nations would go to war with each other. Nebuchadnezzar conquers all the nations and afterwards there is a level of peace and prosperity that world had not known before that and God says that Nebuchadnezzar will be taken out from among men, your dwelling will be among the beasts of the field, and you will eat grass like an ox, they shall wet you with the dew of heaven and seven times shall pass over you until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whoever He chooses. This is to teach Nebuchadnezzar directly and we are supposed to learn from the example so we don't have to go eat grass like an ox. Daniel doesn't just say the judgement, he already has an idea that Nebuchadnezzar know who Jehovah is because Nebuchadnezzar has sent out lets that they should bow down to Jehovah and He knows all things that will happen so he tells Nebuchadnezzar what is missing from what he knows. Verse 27, "Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity." He says to Nebuchadnezzar to repent, don't just profess God with your lips, show it in your behavior. Be merciful to those who cannot bless you, stop committing the sins you know are against the laws of God. Those are the same things that need to happen today to truly believe. You need to break off from your iniquity and say He is indeed King, not just saying it with your mouth but saying it with your behavior. That's what it means to be born again, that's what it means to not be a carnal man anymore but a man of Spirit. That's what it means to have your heart of stone removed and given a heart of flesh, it's that we believe God is Lord. It manifests itself in what we do. Daniel had an idea that Nebuchadnezzar knew who God was, but he had to add to that knowledge true faith. No works have ever saved anyone, but James says to show me your faith by your works. Paul says that God saves us to walk in the good works that He has prepared us to walk in. God saves us so that we can walk in righteousness, He knew Nebuchadnezzar wasn't saved because he wasn't walking in righteousness regardless of how many people he witnessed to. He had already told everyone in the world they needed to submit to God, but that wasn't enough to save him, he had to turn from his iniquity and start caring for others more than himself. Nebuchadnezzar doesn't do that, not for seven years. Verse 30, "The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" He says it's not about God, it is about him. He can say all he wants about who people should worship, he can profess whatever he wants with his mouth, but as long as he thinks his life is about him rather than about God, he is not saved. Jesus Christ said, to have your life you must lose it. Nebuchadnezzar did not lose his life, he can know all kinds of things, but he wouldn't die to himself. Make sure you understand how serious this is. You can come to church, sing praises and pray unceasing, but if you don't make your life about God and make it about yourself, you're not saved. That's what God does, He changed us being a slave of sin and makes us a slave of righteousness instead of us doing what we think is good and right. He changes us and makes us do the things He says are good. That's what it means to die to yourself and you must die to yourself and live for God to have eternal life. Nebuchadnezzar could talk all he wanted, but when he

said it was all about him he wasn't saved any more than if you say it's all about you. So then after bragging, God hears that and sends him out to eat grass like an ox. He literally makes him an animal. You go eat grass and you will die, you will not live seven years. Cows have two stomachs because that's what it takes to be able to consume grass, a human body cannot do that according to nature, but God is sovereign over nature. He can make someone eat grass and live. He controls all things, there is nothing outside His control. We see that because after seven years pass, after his hair becomes like eagle's feather and his nails like bird's claws. That's not what happens according to nature either, if you don't cut your hair it doesn't become like eagle's feathers and if you don't cut your nails they don't become like a bird's talons, but God wanted to say He was so sovereign over all things that happen that I will make Nebuchadnezzar into an animal. Verse 34, "And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding 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 is from generation to generation." God grants him his understanding back because not only did He give him a stomach that could digest grass, not only did He give him feathers and bird's claws, instantly He gave him a mind like an ox. All his reason left him and God, in His mercy, grants him reason back and as soon as he gets reason back, the first thing He does is praise the Most High because He rules in the kingdom of men. His dominion is an everlasting dominion and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the world are reputed as nothing, He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand, no one can say to Him, 'what have You done?' Do you know that God? That's the real God, that's the God who you need to fear. People want to say Jesus Christ is love, but you can't understand how much Jesus Christ is love unless you understand how much power He has, how much mercy He has that He doesn't destroy each person the first time they sin. That is the level of God's mercy, that is who God is. He could destroy each person whenever He wants. Anna, when she prays, she says God kills and God makes alive. Do you believe that? Do you believe that He holds every person's actions in His hand? Nebuchadnezzar believed that, Nebuchadnezzar was saved, Nebuchadnezzar is in heaven. Do you believe in that God? Do you praise and honor Him for who He really is? When you describe Him as helpless and begging people to come to Him, you're not portraying the God that Nebuchadnezzar believed in, you're not believing in the God Jesus Christ and Paul declared. When Paul says in Romans that God will show mercy to whom He will show mercy, Esau He hated, Jacob He loved, God said He was in control, no one can resist My will. Do you believe in that God? It's easy for us to make up a God that we call Jesus Christ and then say we believe in Him, that's not how people are saved, they are saved by believing in the True God. Just to make sure we get it. Can you imagine if the president of Nigeria, if he went and ate grass like an ox for seven years, he went insane so he had the mind of an ox, can you believe he would again become president of Nigeria? Nebuchadnezzar became emperor of the world again. Verse 36, "At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me." Just to make sure that all living knows that God rules in the affairs of men, God does what man would never do. He makes Nebuchadnezzar more powerful after he was insane for seven years. Egypt comes and attacks Babylon, God restores his reason and his nobles say, 'who can restore us except Nebuchadnezzar?' and Nebuchadnezzar becomes a greater ruler than he was before. This is so we can know that God rules in the kingdom of men. Our response should be the same as Nebuchadnezzar's.

Verse 37, "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down."

Nebuchadnezzar says that God is King, he says His ways are just, His words are truth, He's the One who is truly ruling and he treats Him as King. Do you treat God as King? Do you say He gets to tell you what to do? Do you say He has revealed to me His law so I must obey it or do you treat Him as if He is not King and that you can do whatever you want? Professing God in your lips, but not working out your salvation, by not walking in righteousness, that's not what saving faith looks like. Saving faith is being a new creature. God gave us this picture with Nebuchadnezzar. This weird looking beast that has feathers like a bird and nails like talons, and He takes him and makes him a king with greater splendor than any other king, that's what God does. That's what God does with Christians, He takes us from being in this world to being consumed and trapped in the things of this world and He takes us when He saves us and He says, 'You are a king and you are a priest.' Revelation 1 says we are a royal priesthood, we are both kings and priests. That's what we are now. John says it in present tense, not future tense. When God says Jesus Christ is the King of Kings, Christians are the kings that He is over. He rules over all the nations of the earth, but are you acting like a king, are you acting like a priest? Be cautious. God says there is a narrow way and a wide way and the vast majority of people find the wide way and never find the narrow way. Make sure you are on the narrow way. The only way to be on that road is to go through the narrow gate which is Christ. The only way to go through that gate is to die and join Him in His death and join Him in His life. Dying to ourselves, dying to our sins, and walking in the newness of life. This happens in a moment, but is also a process of how we walk in greater holiness. Is that the picture of your life? That's the picture of the life of those that find eternal life. That doesn't mean we look at how great we are because it is Christ who works in us. It is by Him pouring out His Spirit upon us and that's how we walk in greater holiness because God rules in our affairs too. We are counted as nothing before Him, He does according to His will among the inhabitants of the earth. We don't restrain His hand and He's a good Father to His children. He trains and changes us, but what it looks like to us is we are walking in greater and greater holiness. We are doing what Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar to do, we are turning from our iniquities. Is that the God you believe in? We are going to talk later in the next couple nights about how important it is not to ignore the judgment of God. When things come upon us, it is crucial to ask what God is doing, not what the world is doing because the world doesn't control God, God controls the world. Deal with your sin today. Deal with your pride. Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall." Deal with your pride. God dealt with Nebuchadnezzar's pride, that's how serious God considers pride. Deal with your pride, repent from your pride. The last thought I want to close with, make sure you see this God. Make sure you see this God that you fear. You can walk out on the streets and talk to a bunch of people and say you are going to give them a free gift, you are going to give them eternal life. But if they don't fear God, they don't know who He is, you can't give them that gift. God doesn't give them that gift. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. No one is saved without fearing God. You know nothing until you fear God. You cannot know who Christ is without realizing the punishment that you deserve. Make sure you fear God because everyone will fear God. You will either fear Him in this life and turn and thank God and praise Him for His mercy, or they will fear Him in the next when He casts them into hell. Where the worm does not die and the fire does not consume, where for eternity they will be filled with torment beyond anything any of us can imagine. That's what God promises to those who do not fear Him. You will fear

Him. There is no one who spends eternity in hell who does not fear God. Be like Nebuchadnezzar. Fear Him today.

Let me close us in prayer. Oh Lord God, we do thank You for this time. We thank You that You have revealed Yourself to men for we could not know who You are except for Your mercy, except for Your care. Lord, I pray that we have greater fear of You. For those who do not know You, I pray they see You as the One who controls all things, every sickness, every hunger, every economic disaster, every terrorist attack. You have chosen each one because no one can resist Your will. Lord, give us a greater understanding, give us a greater ability to apply that to our lives. Let us flee to You. When we see things happen around us that we feel are so terrible, let us flee to You and beg you for deliverance, for there is no Savior except Jesus Christ. Give us this understanding we pray. We cry out to You, we beg You Lord, increase our understanding of who You are. Bless us, amen.