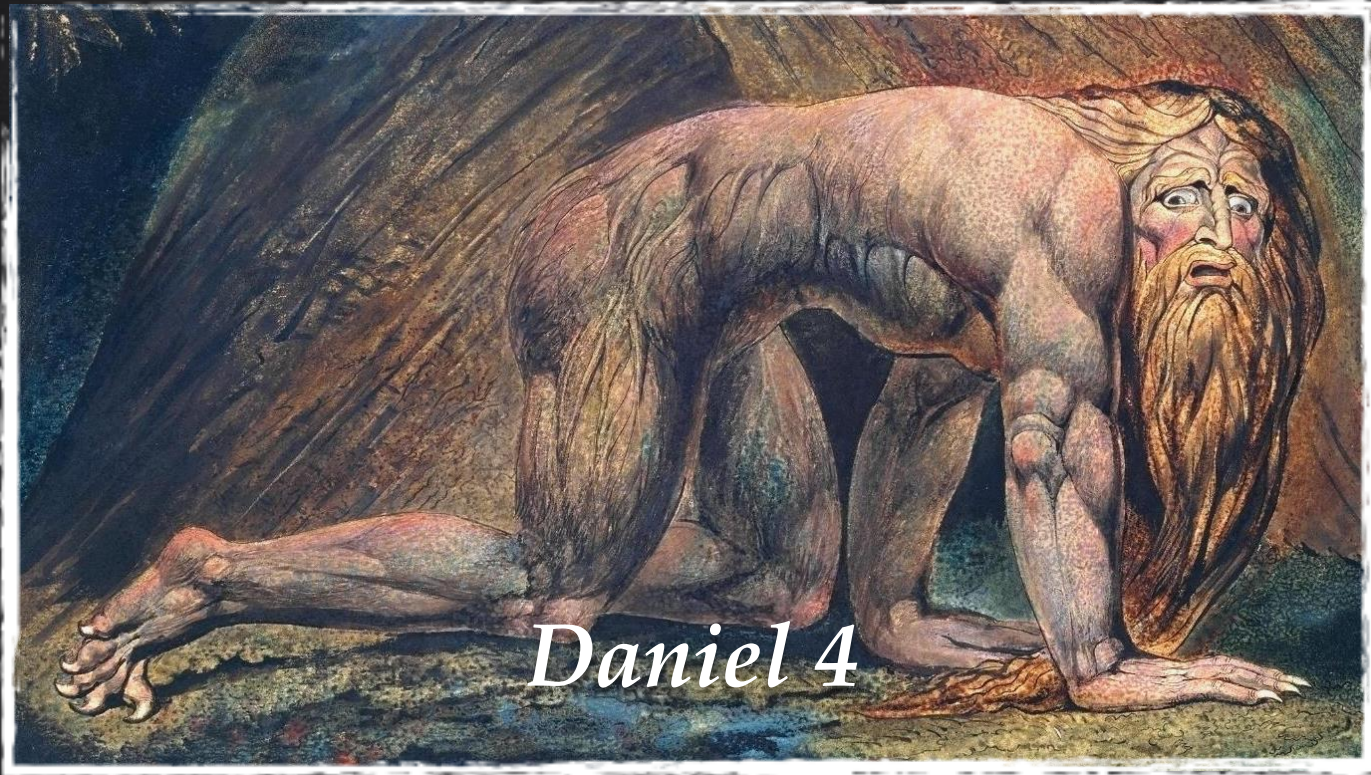


Loving One's Enemies



Daniel 4



MOO!

“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?”

(Matthew 5:44-46; ESV)

“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

(Romans 12:19-21; ESV)

Daniel 4:1-3 (ESV)

1 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...

Daniel 4:18 (ESV)

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.”

Daniel 4:19 (ESV)

19 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!”

Daniel 4:20-21 (ESV)

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—

Daniel 4:22-23 (ESV)

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.’”

Daniel 4:24-25 (ESV)

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..."

Daniel 4:25-26 (ESV)

“...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.”

We all face a choice:
HUMILITY before God or the
HUMILIATION of our pride.

Daniel 4:27 (ESV)

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.”

A scene from the 1951 Disney film 'A Christmas Carol'. Scrooge is on the left, wearing a dark red coat and a grey hat, looking towards the right. He is chained to three ghostly figures: the Ghost of Christmas Past (a balding man with a large nose), the Ghost of Christmas Present (a large, bearded man with a white beard), and the Ghost of Christmas Future (a skeletal figure). They are all wearing heavy metal chains. The scene is set in a dark, industrial-looking environment.

*“DOOMED, SCROOGE!
YOU’RE DOOMED FOR ALL TIME.”*

Daniel loves his enemy by holding onto
HOPE for his ultimate RESTORATION.

Daniel 4:28-30 (ESV)

28 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?”*

Daniel 4:31-32 (ESV)

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..."

Daniel 4:32-33 (ESV)

“...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.

Daniel 4:34-35 (ESV)

34 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?"

Daniel 4:36-37 (ESV)

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.



“The Prayer of Nabonidus”

“Words of the prayer, said by Nabonidus, king of Babylonia, the great king, when afflicted with an ulcer on command of the most high God in Tayma: ‘I, Nabonidus, was afflicted for seven years, and far from men I was driven, until I prayed to the most high God. And an exorcist pardoned my sins. He was a Jew from among the children of the exile of Judah, and said: ‘Recount this in writing to glorify and exalt the name of the most high God.’ Then I wrote this: ‘When I was afflicted for seven years by the most high God with an evil ulcer during my stay at Tayma, I prayed to the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood, stone and lime, because I thought and considered them gods...’” (*Prayer of Nabonidus*)



**“The Chronicle
of Nabonidus”**

“Cyrus Cylinder”

“When...an incompetent person was installed to exercise lordship over his country... He imposed upon them... a counterfeit... a ritual which was improper to them, an unholy display offering... Without fear he daily recited... Irreverently, he put an end to the regular offerings and he interfered in the cultic centers... By his own plan, he did away with the worship of Marduk, the king of the gods. He continually did evil against Marduk's city... ruining them all... Upon hearing their cries, the lord of the gods became furiously angry...”

(Cyrus Cylinder)

We love our enemies by...

- Being a witness of God's light, life, & love

We love our enemies by...

- Being a witness of God's light, life, & love
- Extending to them transformative gospel hospitality

We love our enemies by...

- Being a witness of God's light, life, & love
- Extending to them transformative gospel hospitality
- Praying for them, interceding with God on their behalf

We love our enemies by...

- Being a witness of God's light, life, & love
- Extending to them transformative gospel hospitality
- Praying for them, interceding with God on their behalf
- Holding onto hope for their ultimate restoration

Daniel loves his enemy by holding onto
HOPE for his ultimate RESTORATION.

Will you commit to pray for a similar
sort of restoration and salvation for the
most difficult person in your life?