

“Most High God”
Daniel 4:34-35
(Preached at Trinity, April 20, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. So far, as we've gone through the Book of Daniel our attention has been pretty much limited to 5 primary characters. First, we've looked at Daniel, and then his three Hebrew friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When they were carried off into captivity they were but young men, probably teenagers, yet in Babylon they demonstrated maturity and faithfulness to God far beyond their years.
2. The other major character in these opening chapters is the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. We've seen him as a pagan king, full of superstition, a worshipper of a multitude of gods, and full of pride and arrogance. As we come to the end of **Chapter 4** we find him transformed to a believer in the one true God.
3. In **Chapter 4** we have seen the fearful result of pride. It is fearful for all men. It is a sin that is abominable to God. It is the sin of which all men are guilty and it was Nebuchadnezzar's sin. Because of this sin God brought fearful judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar.
 - A. In **Verse 30** we've seen that Nebuchadnezzar gave all of the credit for his greatness and the greatness of Babylon to himself. To himself alone he gave all the glory.
Daniel 4:30 NAU - "The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'"
 - B. It is reminiscent of James Stewart's character, Charlie Anderson, as he prayed in the 1965 movie Shenandoah,
"Lord, we cleared this land. We plowed it, sowed it, and harvest it. We cook the harvest. It wouldn't be here and we wouldn't be eating it if we hadn't done it all ourselves. We worked dog-bone hard for every crumb and morsel, but we thank you Lord just the same for the food we're about to eat, amen."
 - C. God reduced Nebuchadnezzar to grovel upon the ground like a wild beast. It was actually a great act of God's mercy. Most men live their life in pride and die and go to hell. God mercifully intervened in the life of Nebuchadnezzar by humbling him. This lasted for seven years. His hair grew long and became matted and his fingernails grew to resemble bird claws.
 - D. Finally, God brought him to his senses and he knew that God alone was worthy of all praise and glory.
Daniel 4:34 NAU - "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever"
4. There is a name applied to God in this passage that we find ten times in the Book of Daniel. It is the name, "Most High." Four of these are in form "Most High God."

5. The first time we find it is in **Chapter 3** when Nebuchadnezzar uses it to refer to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
Daniel 3:26 NAU - "Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire."
 At this point Nebuchadnezzar wasn't willing to declare God as the only God. It was merely an expression that He was the Most High God.
Daniel 3:29 NAU - "Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way."
6. In **Chapter 4** we find it six times. In **Verse 2** Nebuchadnezzar uses the phrase as a personal recognition of the Most High God. He declares what God had done for him.
Daniel 4:2-3 NAU - "It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me. ³ "How great are His signs And how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom And His dominion is from generation to generation."
7. This expression has a particular significance as applied to God. It is the name we find in **Isaiah 14**, a passage that refers to the pride of Babylon but also a passage that has often been applied to Satan.
Isaiah 14:12-14 NAU - "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! ¹³ "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. ¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."
 A. The Hebrew word translated "star of the morning" in the NASB is translated Lucifer in the KJV. While the context puts Babylon at the center of God's judgment, pride was also the sin that swallowed up Satan and fueled his rebellion against God.
 B. Why did he use this name of God?
 "I will make myself like the Most High."
 Why didn't he use another name for God? Why didn't he say "I will make myself like the Holy God" or "I will make myself like the Redeemer" or "I will make myself like the eternal God?" He could have simply said, "I will make myself like God."
8. The name "Most High" has a particular significance. It points to God's absolute sovereignty. It points to His unequalled dominion upon the earth.
 A. That is the clear meaning in the Book of Daniel
Daniel 4:17 NAU - "That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men."

- B. We can also see this consistent application elsewhere.
Genesis 14:22 NAU - "Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth,"
Psalms 57:2 NAU - " I will cry to God Most High, To God who accomplishes *all things* for me."
9. When Nebuchadnezzar's reason returned to him he boldly proclaimed the sovereignty of God
Daniel 4:34-35 NAU - "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward 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, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"
10. The problem with fallen man is they don't truly see God as supreme. They don't see Him as the Most High God. When we come face to face with Him all other idols crumble, all other confidences are exposed in their weakness. We see God as the Ruler of all things.
11. Tonight I want us to begin considering God Most High, Ruler of heaven and earth. I want us to consider His absolute sovereignty over all things. We'll look at **Verses 34-35** as our guide as we consider this excellent subject
- I. God is sovereign over all of creation –
 "I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven . . . and honored Him who lives forever"
- A. Nebuchadnezzar recognized God as being high and above all. He turned his eyes upward.
1. God is completely distinct from creation. As much as we try to describe God through our experience He is not like us. The greatest heresies regarding God is when we try to make Him like man.
 Our Confession describes Him in **Paragraph 2:1** (Trinity Hymnal, 671).
 "The Lord our God is but one only living and true God;¹ whose subsistence is in and of himself,² infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but himself;³ a most pure spirit,⁴ invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto;⁵ who is immutable,⁶ immense,⁷ eternal,⁸ incomprehensible, almighty,⁹ every way infinite, most holy,¹⁰ most wise, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will¹¹ for his own glory;¹² most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him,¹³ and withal most just and terrible in his judgments,¹⁴ hating all sin,¹⁵ and who will by no means clear the guilty."
 2. He is high and lifted up. He has existed from eternity
 Creation is finite, He is infinite

- B. God created according to His divine good pleasure
1. Why did God make the earth 2/3 water?
 2. Why is so much of the land uninhabitable?
 3. Why is one country fertile and rich in resources while another is almost barren?
Psalm 115:3 NAU - "But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases."
 4. All of this is determined by God Most High
- C. All of nature has a certain defined order put in place by God Most High
1. There have always been four seasons: S, W, S, F
 2. The moon has always orbited around the earth
 3. A day has always been 24 hours
 4. Gravity upon the earth remains consistent – things consistently weigh the same
 5. Every animal behaves according to its God appointed nature
 6. We expect these things and assume them
 - a. Farmers know there will be springtime and harvest
 - b. Merchants know the weight of an object will be constant
 - c. Ranchers know the various behaviors of their animals
 7. The lost man insists that nature maintains itself – imagine such a perfect balance maintaining itself for thousands of years.
- C. The God who ordered the absolutes of nature can also suspend them
1. While we don't find miracle workers today God can still work miracles today. While in the fiery furnace Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not burned nor were their clothes singed. Recognizing this power Nebuchadnezzar uses the name, "God Most High"
Daniel 3:26 NAU - "Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!"
 2. Nebuchadnezzar was not yet prepared to bow before Him.

Conclusion:

1. What about you? Do you acknowledge this God who is immense, high and lifted up? Have you bowed before Him? Is every aspect of your life under His dominion?
2. May God grant that our lives be consumed in Him and filled with Him. May our hearts be filled with an overwhelming love for Him who is infinitely worthy of our love.