



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 13

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version, BBE=Bible in Basic English, DRA=Douay-Rheims KJV=King James Version, NKJV=New King James Version, NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible, NAU=New American Standard Bible 1995, NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version, NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version, RSV=Revised Standard Version, YLT=Young's Literal Translation.

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----



NEBUCHADNEZZAR TESTIFIES AND HAS A DREAM

^{4:1-9} Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. ² I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward 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. ⁴ I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: ⁵ I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. ⁶ Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. ⁷ Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. ⁸ But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying, ⁹ O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.” ^{KJV}

(Daniel 4:1-9)

INTRODUCTION

Nebuchadnezzar is one of the significant characters of Scripture. Ninety-one references to this king are found in the Word of God. He is mentioned as “Nebuchadnezzar” sixty times in the Scriptures, and as “Nebuchadrezzar” thirty-one times. Books referring to him by these two names include 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah,

Esther, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Thirty-two of these references are found in the book of Daniel. Jeremiah and Ezekiel contain all of the references to “Nebuchadrezzar” (Jer 21:2,7; 22:25; 24:1; 25:1,9; 29:21; 32:1,28; 35:11; 37:1; 39:1,11; 43:10; 44:30; 46:2,13,26,28,30; 50:17; 51:34; 52:4; 12,28,29,30; Ezek 26:7; 29:18,19; 30:10).

However, although this man is mentioned so frequently in Scripture, he is always incidental, and never primary. He is never held forth as a model of conduct, a paragon of virtue, or an individual with great faith. He was Babylonian when first introduced to us (2 Kgs 24:1), and at the last as well. The last Scriptural reference to him is found in

A Remarkable Testify that Lacks Moral and Spiritual Power, and a Troubling Dream, by Given O. Blakely

OUTLINE

- ▶ **MADE GREAT BY GOD (4:1)**
- ▶ **SHOW THE SIGNS AND WONDERS (4:2)**
- ▶ **PRECISE WORDS, BUT LIMITED INSIGHT (4:3)**
- ▶ **AT REST AND FLOURISHING, YET DISRUPTED (4:4-5)**
- ▶ **ANOTHER DECREE (4:6-7)**
- ▶ **AT THE LAST, DANIEL CAME (4:8a)**
- ▶ **ADDRESSING DANIEL (4:8b-9)**

this chapter (verse 37). He had been humbled by God and praised, extolled, and honored the God of heaven. He never acknowledged the God of heaven to be his God, nor did he devote himself to the worship and service of Him.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

History records a great number of Nebuchadnezzar's exploits and accomplishments. I will take the liberty to mention some of them here because they are germane to the development of the text before us. All of this information was taken from McClintok and Strong's Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature. It is heralded as "one of the most exhaustive encyclopedias ever produced in the English language," Cyril J. Barber having over 31,000 entries contained in twelve large volumes.

- ▶ He defeated Pharaoh-Nech, king of Egypt, and recovered Coele-Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine, also taking Jerusalem (Jer 66:2-12; Dan 1:1-2).
- ▶ He came against Jerusalem two more times, utterly devastating it the third time.
- ▶ Defeated Tyre and Phoenicia (Jer 66:13-26).
- ▶ Conquered a great part of Africa and Spain.
- ▶ Rebuilt the temple of Bel (Bel-Merodach).
- ▶ Thoroughly renovated the city of

Babylon.

- ▶ Completed and adorned the walls and gates of Babylon.
- ▶ Constructed a magnificent new palace, "a superb edifice completed in fifteen days.
- ▶ Build the famous "hanging gardens," built of huge stones and planted with trees and shrubs of every kind. The area was four-hundred feet square and seventy-five feet high.
- ▶ Made engines by which water was raised from the river to the surface of the hanging gardens.
- ▶ Throughout the Babylonian empire, "in Borsippa, Sippara, Cutha, Chilmad, Duraba, Teredon, and a multitude of other places, he built or rebuilt cities, repaired temples, constructed quays (structures built parallel to waterways for landings), reservoirs, canals, and aqueducts, on a scale of grandeur and magnificance surpassing everything of the king recorded in history."
- ▶ Dug the Nahr Malcha, or Royal River, which was a branch stream of the Euphrates.
- ▶ Made a great reservoir above the city of Sippara, ninety miles in circumference and one hundred and twenty feet deep.
- ▶ Placed sluices, or flood gates, in the reservoir which enabled him to irrigate the low country.
- ▶ Built a quay (large landing place) along the Red Sea (Persian Gulf).
- ▶ Founded the city of Teredon on the

borders of Arabia.

- ▶ Created a network of canals which covered the vast area between the Euphrates River and the stony desert.
- ▶ Built a single canal, still to be traced, which left the Euphrates at the city of Hit, and skirting the desert ran southeast a distance of four hundred miles to the Persian Gulf, where it emptied into the bay of Grane.
- ▶ Maintained a sophisticated form of government consisting of princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counselors, sheriffs, and rulers of provinces (Dan 3:2-3).

THE REASON FOR THIS

I have taken the time to relate this information because it is the world's assessment of Nebuchadnezzar. From any human perspective, this was a most unusual, successful, and innovative king. **Yet, while he did extend effort in all of these accomplishments, they were not owing to his own wisdom, strength, or creativity.** The Word of God accounts for his success – and not in uncertain words.

A PICTURE OF THE FLESH

All of this prepares the way for the fourth chapter of Daniel. **We have a man singularly benefitted by the God of heaven, and yet, he was unable to obtain any consistency in giving God glory.** In him we have a vivid portrayal of the flesh. It is unable to learn from God beyond surface impressions. The flesh always gravitates downward, choosing first to rely upon men and earthly resources. That is its unchangeable manner. It "profits nothing" (John 6:63), and in it "dwells no good thing" (Rom 7:18).

The Lord can heap

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unparalleled benefits on the flesh, and it will puff up with pride like Nebuchadnezzar, or murmur like Israel in the wilderness. If the flesh is undeniably confronted with God, it becomes frightened like Israel at Sinai, or Nebuchadnezzar at the mouth of the burning fiery furnace. But not much time will elapse until flesh forgets that confrontation, like Israel at the foot of the holy mount, or Nebuchadnezzar twelve months later, boasting of his achievements in the palace (Dan 4:29-30).

All of the efforts to reform the flesh are vain, for flesh cannot

is like an old wineskin into which new life from God cannot be poured (Matt 9:17). Like the devil, who works through it, the flesh cannot be taught, learn from God, or retain the things of God. It forgets what God says, yet retains what the devil says. It does not dwell on the world to come, but on *“this present evil world”* from which Jesus has delivered us (Gal 1:4). If we required deliverance from this world, it certainly can bring us no eternal benefit! That is why a person becomes *“the enemy of God”* at the very instant he becomes a *“friend of the world”* (James 4:4).

If you want to dilute the

the church, for it is pledged to lead the believers in crucifying the flesh and mortifying the deeds of the body, refusing to allow it to live (Rom 8:13). If a person or a church refuses to join in this work, the result is spiritual death, *“For if you live according to the flesh, you will die”* ^{NKJV} (Rom 8:13a). It is to our benefit to learn from the example of Nebuchadnezzar.

THE SETTING OF THIS CHAPTER

The events preceding this chapter reveal how God made Himself known to Nebuchadnezzar. This was designed provoke homage toward the God of heaven, and move the king away from the worship of idols.

IF YOU WANT TO DILUTE THE POWER AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CHURCH, BRING THE FLESH INTO IT. MAKE ITS MANNERS OF THIS WORLD. MOVE ITS PREACHERS AND TEACHERS TO SHAPE THEIR CONCEPTS AND VOCABULARY BY THE WORLD’S STANDARDS.

rise above its source: *“that which is born of flesh IS flesh”* – and it can be nothing more (John 3:6). No good thing is resident in the flesh (Rom 7:18), and nothing good can be put there. This is why Israel became a degenerate plant, even though it had the most noble beginnings possible (Jer 2:21).

This is precisely why godly men and women have no appetite for the flesh, and detest when it is brought into the church as though it was harmless. As soon as people gravitate to the things of the flesh, the things of God begin to wane, and will finally leave their minds altogether. The flesh is a bag with holes that cannot hold the things of God (Hab 1:6). It is a broken cistern that can hold no water (Jer 2:13). It

power and effectiveness of the church, bring the flesh into it. Make its manners of this world. Move its preachers and teachers to shape their concepts and vocabulary by the world’s standards. Penetrate their music with things that do not offend the world. Cut down on the amount of time given to God, and increase the amount of time given to mundane activities. Shape its gatherings so they are not offensive to those who are alienated from God. Move it to develop a program that has a fundamental appeal to those who are *“dead in trespasses and sins.”* By so doing, you have brought the flesh into the church. You have called back what the church was delivered from.

But there are tragic results for doing such a thing. The Spirit then leaves

- ▣ He witnessed four young Hebrews, in the name of their God, excel all of the wise men of Babylon (1:20)
- ▣ He heard Daniel tell him a dream he could not remember, then interpret it declaring both the dream and the interpretation of it had come from the God of heaven (2:26)
- ▣ The Lord revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that all earthly kingdoms would yield to His own Kingdom, which would destroy all other kingdoms (2:44)
- ▣ He heard the witness of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who affirmed they would not bow down to the image he had made (3:16-18).
- ▣ He saw with his own eyes a heavenly messenger walking in the midst of a lethal fire with the three Hebrews (3:25).
- ▣ He and his counselors saw the young men come out of the fire, and beheld how no hurt was upon them, their hair was not singed, their clothing was unharmed, and the smell of fire was not upon them (3:26-27).

MADE GREAT BY GOD

“ ^{4:1-9} *Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.”* Other versions read, *“to all the peoples, nations, and men of every*

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language that live in **all the earth**,^{”NASB}
*“To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in **all the world**,^{”NIV}
 “to all peoples, nations, and languages that live **throughout the earth**.^{”NRSV}
 and “to the people of every race and nation and language **throughout the world**.^{”NJB}*

There is not the slightest hint in our text that this was a regional declaration. Rather, it was clearly, according to the Holy Spirit one for all the world with all of its varied divisions: people (races and ethnic groups), nations (political groups), and languages (cultural groups).

The extent of this declaration indicates the remarkable **expanse** of Nebuchadnezzar’s authority. He was a global ruler in every sense of the word. We should not allow any fleshly jargon, such as “the then known world,” to mitigate the power of this text. Not only is Nebuchadnezzar saying these words, the Holy Spirit is inspiring them to be written by Daniel. If there was no truth in them, or if they were an exaggeration, the Spirit would have said something like, “*For he wist not what to say,*” as in Mark 9:6). The Spirit searches everything, even the deep things of God, and expresses them most precisely (1 Cor 2:10-13).

I conclude, therefore, that when the text says “*ALL people, nations, and languages, that dwell in the earth,*” that is precisely what it means. No valid purpose is served by supposing they mean anything else.

I want to underscore that this remarkable level of influence came from Almighty God. It was not the result of Nebuchadnezzar’s military expertise, technical skills, or leadership qualities. While those things were found in the king, it was not because of any inherent or natural ability he possessed. The word of God is quite clear on this subject. **This is an example of God setting up a king.**

▣ *“I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto Me. And now **have I given all these lands into the hand of***

*Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field **have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son’s son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him**”*
 (Jer 27:5-7)

▣ *“For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; **I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also**”* (Jer 28:14)

▣ *“Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And*

Rather, they were the result of God giving Nebuchadnezzar “*dominion and might and power and glory.*”^{NIV} He conquered nations because they had been given to him by God. That is the reason “*the peoples and nations and men of every language dreaded and feared him.*”^{NIV}

This circumstance is precisely why Nebuchadnezzar will be judged so harshly. He had received his kingdom wholly from God, yet would treat it as though he had developed it himself. God would not overlook his insolence.

PEACE BE MULTIPLIED UNTO YOU
“Peace be multiplied unto you.”
 Other versions read, “May you prosper greatly!”^{NIB} and “Peace and prosperity to you!”^{NLT}

The pronouncement almost sounds Apostolic – but it is not, nor is it

NOT ONLY IS NEBUCHADNEZZAR SAYING THESE WORDS, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS INSPIRING THEM TO BE WRITTEN BY DANIEL. IF THERE WAS NO TRUTH IN THEM, OR IF THEY WERE AN EXAGGERATION, THE SPIRIT WOULD HAVE SAID SOMETHING LIKE, “FOR HE WIST NOT WHAT TO SAY,”

*wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven **hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all . . .**”*
 (Dan 2:37-38).

▣ *“O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor: and for the majesty that He gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down”* (Dan 5:18-19).

The remarkable achievements of this monarch were not of his own doing.

intended to confer the same blessing as is frequently stated in the Apostolic writings (ex, 1 Pet 1:2; 2 Pet 1:2; Jude 1:2). This was an oriental manner of greeting the peoples. This is how David instructed his young men to greet Nabal (1 Sam 25:5-6), who was “*churlish and evil in his doings*” (1 Sam 25:3). When Jesus sent out the seventy, He also told them to greet the house they entered by saying, “*Peace be to this house.*” If then it was, indeed, a peaceable house, the peace would remain upon it (Luke 10:5-6). To this very day, the Jews still greet one another in this manner – “Shalom.”

The idea Nebuchadnezzar intended to convey was his desire for people to be preserved from troubling influences and various forms of disturbance. It was confined to external

matters and appearance, for that was the extend of his understanding. By saying “multiplied,” he conveyed the thought that he wanted favorable conditions to abound. The desire for their outward happiness and prosperity is expressed in this proclamation.

In my opinion, Nebuchadnezzar was feeling good, greatly satisfied with

what he thought were his own achievements. He did not speak in this manner out of a fervent desire for the betterment of the people, but because of his own present peace and tranquility.

Apostolic salutations were of another order. This was because they had greater insight due to the removal of sin and the consequent enthronement of the

Lord Jesus Christ. These marvelous salutations were often pronounced when the servants of the Lord were under great duress, suffering for righteousness sake (Phil 1:2; Col 1:2; 2 Tim 1:6; Phile 1:3). In Christ, such a salutation is lifted to a high level, including the heart, mind, and conscience. It is true, the language is similar to that of the king, yet carries a more profound meaning.

SHOW THE SIGNS AND WONDERS

“² I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.” Other versions read, “*It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me,*”^{NASB} “*It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me,*”^{NIV} “*The signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me I am pleased to recount,*”^{NRSV} and “*I want you all to know about the miraculous signs and wonders the Most High God has performed for me.*”^{NLT}

An Inspired Account

This is Daniel’s inspired account of the proclamation of king Nebuchadnezzar to the world. The language employed by the king is sanctioned by the Spirit, and thus included in the text. It revealed the working and nature of God, and thus the Lord must have moved him to declare these things. Nebuchadnezzar saw some very valid aspects of Almighty God, and could not keep it quiet. **God moved him to declare these things throughout a heathen empire, while His own people were being chastened in the Babylonian captivity!** Even in those

a heathen king! That is how great God is!

I THOUGHT IT GOOD

“*I thought it good . . .*” The heart of the king has been so affected that he was pleased to give an account of God’s dealings with him – even though most of them were very humiliating. We will witness the powerful effects of humility – how it impacts upon the whole attitude of the individual.

One of the sure signs God is dealing with an individual is the breaking down of a reluctance to testify. While it is not my purpose to bind rules upon the people of God, **it is necessary to declare the powerful impact of Divine working upon the souls of men.** This is particularly true when the speaking follows great trials. A few examples will suffice to show this is not infrequently the case.

▣ **Job speaks after his trials.** “*Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.*” (Job 40:4-5)

▣ **Jacob speaks after his trials.** “*I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.*” (Genesis 32:10)

▣ **Joseph speaks after his trials.** “*And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great*

THERE HAVE BEEN PERIODS OF HUMAN HISTORY DURING WHICH PRECIOUS FEW PEOPLE WERE SPEAKING OUT THE WORD OF THE LORD. YET, THE LORD SAW TO IT THAT HIS GOOD WORD AND PROMISES WERE DECLARED BY SOMEONE.

CHAPTER STANDS AS A WHOLE

The fourth chapter stands as a whole. That is, Nebuchadnezzar is himself bearing witness to how the Lord humbled him. He is personally recounting the dream he had, Daniel’s interpretation of it, and his personal experience of it. He shares with the entire world the devastating humiliation he had to experience before he learned something of the greatness and sovereignty of the God of heaven.

days, God did not leave Himself “*without witness*” (Acts 14:17).

There have been periods of human history during which precious few people were speaking out the Word of the Lord. Yet, the Lord saw to it that His good Word and promises were declared by someone. During the Dark Ages, when a thick spiritual haze covered the masses, God raised up poets and musicians who kept the truth alive. **In our text, the truth about God is rifled throughout the world by**

deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.” (Genesis 45:7-8)

☐ **David speaks after his trials.** *“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.”* (Psalms 119:67)

☐ **Paul speaks after his trials.** *“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”* (2 Corinthians 12:10).

The response of people to their trials and rebukes is a critical matter with God. As it is written, *“He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”* (Prov 29:1). On one occasion God said of His own people Israel, *“In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion”* (Jer 2:30). Later Jeremiah confessed, *“ . . . Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return”* (Jer 5:3).

How different were the responses of **David** when rebuked by Nathan (2 Sam 12:7-14), **Hezekiah** when rebuked by Micah (Jer 26:18-19), **Ahab** when rebuked by Elijah (1 Kgs 21:17-29), **Manasseh** when carried away captive (2 Chron 33:12-13), the Ninevites under the preaching of Jonah (Jonah 3:5-9), **Peter** when he denied Jesus (Matt 26:73), and **Saul of Tarsus** when confronting Jesus (Acts 9:6-9).

Our response to correction is important, and we dare not treat it as though it was inconsequential. We have a new breed of religion these days that is driven by psychological principles, and repentance is not a prominent part of it. There are too many explanations being

offered for deviate conduct and unacceptable manners, and too little sensitivity to the chastening of the Lord.

When Nebuchadnezzar published a decree that declared it seemed “good” to him to make known how God had been dealing with him, he was responding favorably to the strong hand of God.

I have mentioned that Nebuchadnezzar mirrors the nature of the flesh. He did not speak of God in this manner because of the truth he had heard. **Rather, it was because of the frustration and impotence he had experienced.** There are times when flesh can be humbled in this manner, but it is generally short-lived. An example of this is found in the repentance of Nineveh. They did, indeed, repent *“at the preaching of Jonah”* (Matt 12:41). Yet, in the

part of their being or persons. It was only on the surface, not in the heart.

Make no mistake about this, repentance is good, and testifying is comely. We can take nothing from that. My point is that neither can be sustained by the flesh. **Only those who have been regenerated, becoming a “new creation” in Christ Jesus** (2 Cor 5:17), **can be consistent in their response to God.** This circumstance accounts for much of the erratic behavior that is found within the church. Such people are more like Nebuchadnezzar than Christ. Their religion is by fits and starts, but has no consistency to it. It is one thing for the king of Babylon to be like this. It is quite another for such a condition to be found in this *“day of salvation”* (2 Cor 6:2), when the *“sun of righteousness”* (Mal 4:2) has risen to His zenith, and the

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process of time, they lapsed back into iniquity once again, and were thus later *“laid waste”* and made *“desolate”* (Nahum 3:7; Zeph 2:13).

An even more vivid depiction of this principle is seen in backsliding Israel. God poured blessings upon her, chastened her, and hewed her by the Prophets (Isa 5:4; Jer 31:18; Hos 6:5). Yet He said of her, *“Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return”* (Jer 8:5). The up and down experiences of Israel are clearly seen in the concise book of Judges. **Their religion was wholly inconsistent, even though it had been revealed from heaven, and given to them by God.** However, as with Nebuchadnezzar, it did not get past the flesh, or the natural

abundance of grace is available to anyone who desires it.

SHOWING THE SIGNS AND WONDERS

“ . . . to show the signs and wonders . . . ” Nearly every version of Scripture uses these words, *“signs and wonders.”* Two modern translations read, *“miraculous signs and wonders,”* ^{NIBandNLT}

Both words denote the miraculous working of God. That is, things that were done apart from natural causes. These are works that are transcendent to nature. **They can only be done by God, and they cannot be duplicated by men.** In them, the laws of nature are suspended, having no power to dominate the circumstance. Thus Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still (Josh 10:12), Elisha raised the widows son from

the dead (1 Kgs 17:21), Peter walked on water (Matt 14:29), and Jesus fed a multitude with five loaves and two fishes (Matt 14:19).

It is not possible for a scientist or analyst to explain precisely how a sign or wonder takes place. They occur outside the realm to which all human knowledge is limited. **A miracle cannot be put into a test tube for analyzation and explanation. They can only be accounted for by a Living God, who, according to His own will, often works in contradiction of nature, and in spite of hopeless conditions.** These are opportunities for His greatness.

confirmed the Lord was the “*God of Gods and Lord of kings*” (Dan 2:47). This was confirmed by the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and his own seven year tenure in the field as a beast.

Wonders

A “*wonder*” is something that causes those who behold it to marvel or stand in awe. This is seen in the effect of our Lord’s miracles upon His own disciples. “*But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him*” (Mat 8:27). And again, when He cursed the fig tree, “*And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, How soon is the fig tree*

Lord. For example, the Lord “*showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household*” (Deu 6:22). **They proved to be the means God used to harden Pharaoh’s heart.** When Jesus wrought wonderful works, they had no impact upon many. Thus it is written, “*But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him*” (John 12:37).

The Psalmist spoke of God’s wonders as actually causing people to marvel, **then run away.** “*For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together. They saw it, and so they marveled; they were troubled, and hasted away*” (Psa 48:5). On another occasion, Jesus said His great works had moved people to hate Him and His Father. “*If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father*” (John 15:24).

While Nebuchadnezzar did not rise to the heights of those who walk and live by faith, he certainly did not sink to the depths of Pharaoh, or those who hated Jesus and God because of Christ’s mighty works.

Differing Effects

There are differing effects of “*signs and wonders*” upon those who see them. Everyone does not respond in the same way. On one occasion, shortly before the night He was betrayed, Jesus confessed His soul was troubled. On that occasion He reasoned, “*what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour*” (John 12:27). His great heart moved Him to then cry out, “*Father, glorify Thy name.*”

Immediately, as though eager to honor His Son, God spoke from heaven. “*Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*” It was an audible voice – both a sign and a wonder. How would the people respond to it?

There were three differing reactions to the voice of the Lord. “*The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered*

A MIRACLE CANNOT BE PUT INTO A TEST TUBE FOR ANALYZATION AND EXPLANATION. THEY CAN ONLY BE ACCOUNTED FOR BY A LIVING GOD, WHO, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN WILL, OFTEN WORKS IN CONTRADICTION OF NATURE, AND IN SPITE OF HOPELESS CONDITIONS.

Two Categories

Signs

Nebuchadnezzar refers to “*signs*” and “*wonders.*” A “*sign*” is a miracle that verifies something, confirms something that has been declared, or declares a fact that was not seen before. Thus Jesus spoke of “*the sign of the prophet Jonah,*” miraculously swallowed by a fish, and expelled again to preach to Nineveh (Matt 12:39). The return of the Lord is also said to be “*the sign of the Son of man,*” confirming He is precisely who He said He was, and will do exactly what He said He would do (Matt 24:30). Paul wrought certain miracles referred to as “*signs of an Apostle,*” or confirmations that he was who he said he was – “*an Apostle of Christ*” (2 Cor 12:12).

The word “*sign*” speaks of the purpose of the miracle. It is an indicator, or ratification of something greater than itself.

In Nebuchadnezzar’s case, “*signs*”

“*withered away!*” (Mat 21:20). When Jesus raised the man sick of palsy, “*the multitude saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men*” (Mat 9:8).

The word “*wonder*” speaks of the effect of the miracle upon those beholding it.

“*Signs and wonders*” are not different classes of miracles, but different views of them. One is objective – making a point. The other is subjective – catching the attention and awe of the beholder. Thus, when Nebuchadnezzar spoke of “*signs and wonders*” he was speaking of the mighty works of God that brought something home to his heart. He was also speaking of those same works as transcendent to anything he had ever seen before, inspiring his awe.

Cannot Convert the Soul

“*Signs and wonders*” do not convert the soul. Nor, indeed, do they of themselves cause people to turn to the

and said, **This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes**" (John 12:28-30). The first group were utterly obtuse like Pharaoh. To them, it was merely a natural occurrence – "it thundered." Others, in the category of Nebuchadnezzar knew this was not a natural phenomenon, but a heavenly one. They concluded an angel had spoken to Him. Jesus, however, perceived the fulness of the event. He told the people the voice was not for His benefit, but for theirs – even though many did not see it.

Have A Right Perspective

Do not imagine that a great outbreak of "signs and wonders" would result in conquering wayward souls. Yet, you must not become a religious skeptic either, as though they had no place, and God has altogether ceased such activity. There had not been "signs and wonders" for a long time when Daniel and his colleagues found themselves captives in Babylon. However, that did not mean they were no longer possible, as our text affirms. The same was true in the time of Gideon (Judges 6:3).

In fact, there have been very few times in the history of the world when there was a sustained period of regular miracles – "signs and wonders." If some of our modern theologians had been living during those times when "signs and wonders" were not apparent, they probably would have reasoned that God had stopped doing such things. Their view is so utterly absurd, that no Prophet would be summoned to rebuke them. **Rather, Nebuchadnezzar would probably be called to bear witness to their religious folly – just as he is doing in our text.**

It is a noble soul that can still believe God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," even though there may be little apparent evidence of it around us (Eph 3:20). I urge you to "have faith in God" (Mk 11:22). God's hand "is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy that is cannot hear" (Isa 59:1). He still honors faith, and can intervene in the affairs of men in the behalf of His children. He has never said a time would come when things "impossible" for men would **not** be "possible" with Him (Mk

10:27). **And, who is the theologian who wishes to affirm things possible for God are things He refuses to do?** The affirmation of Divine possibility is intended to bring hope to believers.

Why Say These Things?

This is not a mere hobby-horse. I know from experience of the debilitating effects of faulty theology. Those who have been convinced "the days of miracles is past" cannot read Daniel with much profit

wrought toward me." Other versions read, "has worked for me," ^{NKJV} "has done for me," ^{NASB} "has performed for me," ^{NIV}

The greater weight of testimony comes when it is personal.

It is one thing to declare what God has done for someone else. That is not bad, but there comes a time when it is not the best. Nebuchadnezzar might well have spoken about the supernatural wisdom and knowledge he had seen in the four children

AND, WHO IS THE THEOLOGIAN WHO WISHES TO AFFIRM THINGS POSSIBLE FOR GOD ARE THINGS HE REFUSES TO DO? THE AFFIRMATION OF DIVINE POSSIBILITY IS INTENDED TO BRING HOPE TO BELIEVERS.

– for it is a book of Divine intervention. **The Scriptural postulate is that there is possibility with God.** Let no person rob the saints of God of that perception! With Him, all things are possible! This is even associated with individuals being saved, or entering into the Kingdom (Matt 19:25-26).

Many of God's people are in circumstances that are too challenging for men. **If God does not come to their aid, they have no hope at all.** Who is the person who will come as a thief to rob them of the persuasion God is able to work in their behalf?

Let me be clear about those who would take this persuasion from believers – any who would affirm God no longer intrudes into the affairs of men in supernatural ways. **There is no place for such a person in the Kingdom of God!** Their influence is like a morose cloud descending upon tender hearts. Their view is based upon human interpretation, but Divine affirmation. God always leaves the believer with the idea He will help, deliver, and direct. If people cannot receive that from us, they will surely receive it from Nebuchadnezzar on the day of judgment.

WROUGHT TOWARD ME

" . . . that the high God hath

of Judah (Dan 1:20). He could have proclaimed the revealed wisdom of Daniel when he told him his first dream and the interpretation of it (Dan 2:43). He might even have proclaimed how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered from a fiery furnace to which he himself had consigned them (Dan 3:24-27).

Instead, Nebuchadnezzar declares what the Lord had done "toward" him – how he had worked with him in a most remarkable way. He is speaking in particular about the event included in his proclamation (vs 29-37). Like the former Gadarene demoniac, he will declare "how great things the Lord had done" unto him (Mark 5:19). He will do like Mary, the mother of our Lord, who said, "For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name" (Luke 1:49). Like Lot he will confess, "Thou hast magnified Thy mercy, which Thou hast showed unto me in saving my life" (Gen 19:19).

May no child of God be upstaged by Nebuchadnezzar! If the Lord has done great things toward you, tell it! Speak it out, and do so without fear. Let it "be good" to you to speak of the hand of the Lord being upon you. Peruse your life, and see what He has done for you. It will fire your heart and strengthen your speech. Search and see! See and speak!

PRECISE WORDS BUT LIMITED INSIGHT

“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.” In my judgment, these words could **not** have been said without Divine influence. There is no form of human wisdom or logic that can move men to speak in this manner. Human affection is not strong enough to cause such marvelous speech to erupt from the mouth and pen! In a sense, it is like the stones crying out (Lk 19:40).

HOW GREAT ARE HIS SIGNS

“How great are His signs! Every major version reads exactly the same. In all of the Bible, Nebuchadnezzar is the only one quoted as saying these words.

not an end of themselves, but testify to His greatness. They confirm He is, indeed, the “*God of gods and Lord of kings.*”

HOW MIGHTY ARE HIS WONDERS

“ . . . and how mighty are His wonders!” Again, every major translation reads the same. “*Mighty*” wonders are overpowering wonders, or overriding displays of Divine authority. They occur when Divine power meets the power of nature, men, or the devil and his hosts, and simply rolls over them. Mighty wonders would include the Red Sea parting (Ex 15:8), the sun and moon standing still (John 10:12), the accompanying tempests at Sinai (Heb 12:18), the slaying of 185,000 Syrian hosts

Israel, but to get His glorious name among the nations while His own people were in a captive state. Here is an example of the truth declared in Revelation 12:16: “*And the earth helped the woman.*”

Child of God, your Lord’s “*great signs*” and “*mighty wonders,*” are part of the Divine arsenal that God employs in your behalf. None of your enemies are able to contend with them or cause them to be powerless. Look at your own situation. **If you are facing grief, sorrow, weakness, or some other form of trial, ponder what can happen if the Lord raises His arm, looks at you with His eye, or turns His ear toward you.**

GOD’S WONDERS ARE “MIGHTY,” AND NO OPPOSING FORCE CAN HINDER OR NEUTRALIZE THEM! IF GOD WILL WORK IN YOUR BEHALF, THERE IS NO POWER IN HEAVEN, EARTH, OR UNDER THE EARTH THAT CAN DIMINISH THAT WORK ONE WHIT.

Should He choose to work in your behalf, the prison doors you are experiencing can be opened like those in Philippi were for Paul and Silas (Acts 16:26). If your soul is famished and you sense a spiritual famine all around you, God can feed you with the birds of the air, like He did Elijah (1 Kgs 17:4-6). The very Divine power that subdued Nebuchadnezzar will sustain you. Do not ignore what **He** can do. Bring His “*great signs*” and “*mighty wonders*” into the scenario! Your difficulties will look different when you view them in faith.

Yet, truer words could not have been spoken. Moses said God “*showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes*” (Deu 6:22). Joshua referred to the “*great signs*” God did when delivering the people from Egypt (Josh 24:17). So, this is certainly not a strange concept.

Signs that are “*great*” are domineering signs – signs that dwarf everything else and induce fear in the beholders. They are signs that cannot be subdued, overlooked, or treated as though they did not occur. By saying “**HOW great,**” the king accents they extended beyond any human comprehension, causing the spirit of God’s enemies to wither. Such signs move far beyond being mere impressions, and are thus unlike the “*great signs*” wrought by “*false Christ’s and false prophets*” (Matt 24:24). **The “great signs” wrought by God are**

(2 Kgs 19:35), the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan 3:27), and the triumphant resurrection of Christ (Rom 1:4).

In all of these instances, there were opposing forces that would have prohibited the wonder – but they could not. God’s wonders are “*mighty,*” and no opposing force can hinder or neutralize them! **If God will work in your behalf, there is no power in heaven, earth, or under the earth that can diminish that work one whit.**

Nebuchadnezzar sensed this through his own humiliating experience, and insisted that the whole world know about it. Furthermore, this was not difficult for him to do because he was the ruler of the world. He simply proclaimed it, and the word went forth. **I conclude, therefore, that God not only raised Nebuchadnezzar up to chasten**

AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM

“ . . . His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom . . . ” When Daniel explained Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the great multi-metaled image, he spoke of God setting up a kingdom. Of that kingdom he said, “*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever*” (Dan 2:44). Now the king sees this more clearly, and proclaims it to “*all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth.*”

The thought has occurred to me that it would be wonderful to have an influential person of our time make such a declaration. This compromising era does not often hear such proclamations, even

though, under the administration of Jesus, much more is now known of this kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar had to be brought low before he could declare this. We have been *“raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places.”* Such affirmations ought to be common among those who are in Christ Jesus.

Several centuries before Nebuchadnezzar, David confessed with insight, *“Thy kingdom is an **everlasting kingdom**, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations”* (Psa 145:13) – almost exactly what the king of Babylon said. Several centuries after Nebuchadnezzar, Peter wrote, *“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the **everlasting kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Pet 1:11). Isaiah also spoke of this aspect of God’s kingdom, referring to it under the administration of the Lord Jesus. *“Of the increase of his government and peace **there shall be no end**, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice **from henceforth even for ever**. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this”* (Isa 9:7).

The Kingdom of God is not simply another kingdom among many others. It is the dominant one, with all others subordinate to it. The Babylonian kingdom is a case in point. Although a world power, God was governing even that mighty empire, using it for His own glory. He used that kingdom to bring His servants into prominence. Through it they received authority, and exercised great influence.

Those who imagine God’s Kingdom is slated to come at some future time, remaining inactive until that time, are in great error. The revelation of the Kingdom is not to be equated with the Kingdom itself. Right now, in Christ, we have *“received”* this Kingdom, and have been *“translated”* into it (Heb 12:28; Col 1:13). **God and everything associated with Him do not begin at the point they are revealed, and it is damaging to the soul to think in such as though that was true.** The Word was manifested and dwelt among us, but He did not begin to be at that time (John 1:1,14), but was manifested. Revelation has to do with confirmation, not beginnings.

Another day has been scheduled on the Divine agenda when the Father is going to unveil, or manifest, the Son. He will show Him to be *“the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords”* (1 Tim 6:15). That is not when He will begin to be these things, but when He will be revealed in that capacity.

So it is with the Kingdom of God. Because it is an *“everlasting kingdom,”* it cannot be circumscribed by time and circumstance. Nebuchadnezzar sensed this. He was able to correlate what had occurred to Him with the Kingdom of God – with the Sovereign and unquestionable rule of Almighty God.

In this regard, the Babylonian

rule goes on from generation to generation.”^{BBE}

The word *“dominion”* means sovereignty – authority that is implemented without any effective resistance. The *“dominion”* of God is another view of His Kingdom. The word *“Kingdom”* speaks of the purpose of God and its penetration into all the world. It is a purpose that is not only determined, but is carried out. God’s *“dominion”* speaks His of power to implement His will under any and all circumstances.

The dominion of God is not interrupted, much less terminated, or supplanted by some other kingdom. **There has never been a generation**

MANY AMONG CONFESSED BELIEVERS APPEAR UNABLE TO RELATE THEIR OWN LIVES TO THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD. THEY LOOK AT THEIR TROUBLES AND ASK IF GOD REALLY CARES. AFTER SOME DIVINE TUTELAGE, NEBUCHADNEZZAR SAW HIS GRIEF AS THE INTERPOSITION OF GOD.

heathen surpasses many professing *Christians*. Many among confessed believers appear unable to relate their own lives to the government of God. They look at their troubles and ask if God really cares. After some Divine tutelage, Nebuchadnezzar saw his grief as the interposition of God. Adversity trickles into the lives of many, and they become angry with God. Nebuchadnezzar spoke of God’s great signs and mighty wonders toward him. Through him we can learn of the possibilities of praise. Those possibilities are greatly increased in Christ Jesus, so that no justified person should come behind the Chaldean king.

DOMINION FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

*“ . . . and His dominion is **from generation to generation.**”* The NIV read, *“endures from generation to generation.”* Other versions read, *“His rule through all generations,”*^{NLT} *“His power to all generations,”*^{SEPTUAGINT} *“His*

in which God did not dominate. There has been no time in which His dominion, or area of rule, shrank or became smaller. This was demonstrated in the Garden, when sin entered. Regardless of their will and wisdom, Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden. The Lord had dominion! The same type of thing happened in the days of Noah. The world lifted up its heel against God, and His dominion prevailed as He cleansed the earth of moral defilement. His dominion was also seen in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as the overthrow of Egypt and the nations that dwelt in Canaan.

Anytime God raises His hand to work, or determines to do a thing, His dominion is made known. If He determines that Abraham will have a son through Sarah, after his body is *“as good as dead,”* and Sarah is hopelessly barren, it will take place. **His dominion is from generation to generation!** If He decides to deliver Israel from Egypt after

430 years of bondage, they will come out in a single night, with not so much as a hoof left behind. **His dominion is from generation to generation!**

Because God's dominion proceeds uninterrupted and unmitigated from generation to generation, He declares: *"The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand"* (Isa 14:24). And again, *"I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it"* (Isa 46:11). How vividly the Psalmist declared this truth. *"The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations"* (Psa 33:10-11). **His dominion is from generation to**

but they did not originate with him. The Holy Spirit did not include them in Scripture to promote Nebuchadnezzar, but to assure the hearts of the saints of the power of the living God.

God has opened the mouths of wayward people to speak His truth, therefore displaying His dominion.

- ▣ *"God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"* (Num 23:19) – **spoken by Balaam.**
- ▣ *"I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked"* (Exo 9:27) – **spoken by Pharaoh.**

God was speaking through them – and that for our benefit.

FLAWED THEOLOGIES

The words spoken by Nebuchadnezzar – *"His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation"* – expose a bit of flawed theology that is found among some. The particular view of which I speak uses the term *"prophetic time clock."* Briefly stated, the view postulates that God's purpose for the Jews ran amuck, causing Him to temporarily switch to another plan. This differing plan is called *"the church age,"* and refers to His working within the Gentile church until He finally resumes His original purpose. Realizing this does not easily fit into the Scriptures, the proponents of this view say that God's *"prophetic time clock"* was temporarily stopped – it ceased to tick, so to speak. Once certain end-time prophecies are fulfilled, that clock will start ticking again.

This view sharply conflicts with God's kingdom being "everlasting," and His "dominion" extending from one generation to another. It presumes the effective thwarting of the purpose of God – at least for a time. If that is possible, there is a generation, perhaps multiple generations, to which God's dominion did not extend. We would, then, have an *"everlasting kingdom"* being interrupted, and a purposed dominion put on hold. These things simply cannot be.

Why Do Men Do This?

The sensitive heart wonders why men concoct such views, superimposing them upon the Word of God itself. It is because they have adopted a theological view that is actually external to the Scriptures themselves. It is a finely tuned religious system with many intricacies of thought, all of which are highly appealing to the flesh. The Bible is then read with this view in mind. The position is placed like a template upon the text of Scripture. The person who has received the position thus reads around texts that clearly conflict with the view, never really seeing them. Other texts, because of the template, become distorted, making them appear as though they support the flawed view. Such powerful delusion thus comes upon the soul that the individual cannot

REGARDLESS OF SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE REIGN OF ALMIGHTY GOD EXTENDS FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER – EVEN FROM SOLOMON TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR, AND FROM NEBUCHADNEZZAR UNTIL THIS VERY DAY. HE HAS NOT CHANGED. HIS PURPOSE HAS NOT CHANGED. HIS DOMINION OVER ALL IS STILL IN PLACE – EVEN AT THIS VERY HOUR.

generation!

Even though, according to appearance, it may have looked like God's dominion was interrupted when Jerusalem was conquered and devastated by Nebuchadnezzar, that was not the case at all. Regardless of seemingly impossible circumstances, the reign of Almighty God extends from one generation to another – even from Solomon to Nebuchadnezzar, and from Nebuchadnezzar until this very day. He has not changed. His purpose has not changed. His dominion over all is still in place – even at this very hour.

Not Just the Words of Nebuchadnezzar

These are not merely the words of Nebuchadnezzar. **They came from him, and no doubt registered to a measurable degree upon his spirit,**

- ▣ *"Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him"* (Mat 27:19) – **spoken by Pilate's wife of Jesus.**
- ▣ *"Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him"* (John 19:4) – **spoken by Pilate of Jesus.**
- ▣ *"I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood"* (Mat 27:4) – **spoken by Judas of Jesus.**

It is the manner of the Spirit to include truth in Scripture, even when it is spoken by those who are not themselves reconciled to God or serving Him. In such cases, we are not to assume the cold and calculating human intellect brought these individuals to speak in such a manner. They certainly were not mere robots, but

even “*acknowledge the truth*” (2 Tim 2:25).

Fortunately, Nebuchadnezzar was not exposed to these fanciful human theologies. Being moved to some degree by

God, he got the right message, and thus articulated a proper view of Almighty God. I do not doubt that he will rise in the day of judgment like the Queen of Sheba and the men of Nineveh (Matt 12:42-43).

42), to testify against those who have concluded things about God and His purpose that simply cannot be supported by His Word. Their record should prepare us for the day of judgment.

AT REST AND FLOURISHING, YET DISRUPTED

“⁴ *I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace:* ⁵ *I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.*” To this point, everything in the proclamation has been an introduction. Nebuchadnezzar has stated the bottom line first – the summation of the manner. Now he will declare what has brought him to the stated conclusions.

A Divine Manner Seen

In this, the Divine manner can again be seen. In God’s Kingdom, learning is different than it is in the world. The world learns from the bottom up. By that, I mean elementary things are first taught, then, progressively, more difficult things are learned. An example would be learning the ABC’s, then certain uncomplicated words, then sentences, then whole thoughts . . . etc. That is the manner of the world, and does apply to things pertaining to the world.

However, with God learning is from the top down. First the summary things, then the details. This is the principle upon which all of the promises of God are based. For example, in the Garden God promised, “*And I will put enmity between thee (Satan) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed (Jesus); it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel*” (Gen 3:15). There was a noticeable absence of details, to be revealed later. The Seed Himself was not identified, nor when He would come into the world, or where He would be born. The woman who would give birth to Him was not identified. Yet, when you read the Scriptures with this promise in mind, a great deal of understanding is found.

The preaching of the Gospel is according to the same principle. In

its summation the Gospel is said to be this: “*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you . . . how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures*” (1 Cor 15:1-4). Why Jesus died is not affirmed in this summation. Other critical matters are omitted, such as justification (Rom 5:9), reconciliation Col 1:21), making peace with God (Col 1:20), putting away sin (Heb 9:26), destroying the devil (Heb 2:14), and plundering principalities

mine house . . .” Other versions read, “*at ease in my house,*”^{NASB} “*at home in my palace,*”^{NIV} “*living at ease in my home,*”^{NRSV} “*thriving in my house,*”^{SEPTUAGINT} and “*living comfortably in my house.*”^{NJB}

When This Occurred

This occurred during the close of Nebuchadnezzar’s ministry. He reigned from forty-three to forty-five years. One year after this dream, what it portrayed came to pass (verse 29). The judgment covered lasted seven years (verse 32). We do not know how long he lived after this

THUS, SPEAKING THROUGH NEBUCHADNEZZAR THE HEATHEN, GOD INFORMS THE WORLD FIRST OF HIMSELF. NEBUCHADNEZZAR WILL RELATE THINGS GOD HAS DONE – NOT THINGS HE MERELY ALLOWED TO HAPPEN.

and powers (Col 2:15). Now, however, when the details are read with this summation in mind, understanding becomes fruitful.

Thus, speaking through Nebuchadnezzar the heathen, **God informs the world first of Himself. Nebuchadnezzar will relate things GOD HAS DONE – not things He merely allowed to happen.** This is in perfect keeping with God’s manner to reveal Himself in “*signs*” and “*wonders*” that cannot be produced through nature. His kingdom is everlasting, and His dominion extends uninterrupted from generation to generation. The events that follow are an example of this.

AT REST IN MINE HOUSE

“I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in

event, but is generally agreed that is was a year or two. That means this dream took place around the thirty-fifth year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign.

We know that Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem in the ninth year of his reign (2 Kgs 25:1). Including the three years of preparation Daniel and his friends went through (1:3), and the period of time covered by the interpretation of the king’s dream of the great image, and the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, it is possible this case took place as many as ten or more years after the events of chapter three.

At Ease In My House

This expression means everything was peaceful – not merely in the house, but in the kingdom. There were no

A Remarkable Testify that Lacks Moral and Spiritual Power, and a Troubling Dream, by Given O. Blakely

apparent adversaries, and things were in a state of tranquility and safety. The wars had ceased, and, as we will see, he had built a magnificent capital. Like the man whose crops had yielded abundantly, he could say, *“Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry”* (Luke 12:19). It was highly unlikely that anything could now disturb the king. His military exploits had been successful, as well as his construction projects. Surely a long period of rest could now be enjoyed – at least, that is what Nebuchadnezzar thought.

FLOURISHING IN MY PALACE

“ . . . I Nebuchadnezzar was . . . flourishing in my palace . . . ” Not only

even though the Lord had dealt sufficiently with him that such thoughts should have been very dominant. The judgments of God were *“out of sight,”* not in the remotest consideration of the king. He had forgotten about the devouring kingdom of God had shown to him in a dream. He had also apparently gotten over what he witnessed in and out of the burning fiery furnace. God had dealt with him extensively on two separate occasions, but he was not recalling them now.

If ever there was a lethargic soul, here is one. His soul was not tuned into heaven, and his mind was not occupied with any considerations of or quest for the Living God. **Can God get the attention**

terrified me, ^{”SEPTUAGINT}

Suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar’s ease and prosperity is interrupted. There is an intrusion into his thoughts, and it came from heaven! Because the king was unfamiliar with God, and consequently could not hold intelligent dialog with Him, he receives a dream – something he can behold. As we will see, it is an extended dream – like the first one he received from God (chapter 2). **This was the Sovereign God at work, and He could not be withheld from that work – not by Satan, or by the will of the king.**

This is not the first time God worked in this manner.

- ☐ God arrested the attention of Abimelech, heathen king of Gerah, with a dream (Gen 20:3).
- ☐ The Lord came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, taking hold of his mind (Gen 31:24).
- ☐ An Egyptian baker and butler were brought to their senses with God-sent dreams (Gen 40:8-23).
- ☐ The Pharaoh during Joseph’s tenure in Egypt had two dreams from the Lord that troubled him (Gen 41:1-36).
- ☐ One of the Midianites to be overthrown by Gideon’s hosts received a troubling dream (Judges 7:13).
- ☐ The tranquility of Pilate’s wife was interrupted by a unsettling dream (Matt 27:19).

Do not think for one moment that the mighty God of heaven cannot arrest the mind of one who is far from Him!

TROUBLING VISIONS

“ . . . and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.” Other versions read, *“these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me,”* ^{NASB} *“the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me,”* ^{NIV} and *“the visions that passed through my head tormented me.”* ^{NJB}

These were, then, reoccurring

SUDDENLY, NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S EASE AND PROSPERITY IS INTERRUPTED. THERE IS AN INTRUSION INTO HIS THOUGHTS, AND IT CAME FROM HEAVEN! BECAUSE THE KING WAS UNFAMILIAR WITH GOD, AND CONSEQUENTLY COULD NOT HOLD INTELLIGENT DIALOG WITH HIM, HE RECEIVES A DREAM – SOMETHING HE CAN BEHOLD.

was there a peaceful environment, prosperity was uninhibited: good health, an untroubled mind, abounding in substance, indulging all appetites without any need of restraint. Everything was going his way!

While this is an enviable state to the flesh, however, it is not so from the heavenly perspective. David delivered a stirring depiction of such prosperous souls. *“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity”* (Psa 10:3-6). We know from the events of this chapter that this is precisely the frame of the king’s mind and soul. He was not seeking after God. God was not in his thoughts,

of such a person? If His kingdom is an everlasting one He can! If His dominion is from generation to generation He can! This may appear to be a challenging circumstance for men, but it is not for God.

An Application

You must be able to apply this to the circumstances of your own life. There may be people you know whose hearts and minds are anything but occupied with God. They may be at ease, and even flourishing, with no intention of seeking after the Lord, or even thinking upon His name. But God **can** get their attention.

A DREAM THAT CAUSED FEAR

“ . . . I saw a dream which made me afraid . . . ” Other versions read, *“I had a dream and it made me fearful,”* ^{NASB} *“I saw a dream which frightened me,”* ^{NRSV} *“I saw a dream which was a cause of great fear to me,”* ^{BBE} *“ I saw a vision, and it*

visions, just like his first dream. They appeared to intensify rather than diminish in their effects. The king could not get away from the thoughts being sent into his mind in the form of a dream and visions. It is as though whenever he went to sleep, a flood of overriding dreams and thoughts rushed into his mind and head. They came from God, and there was no way to stop them.

One minute Nebuchadnezzar was “at ease” in his house. The next, his thoughts were taken over by the Lord, and his head was dominated by visions. **This was not an act of his will. Rather, it was an act of God’s will.**

When it comes to this dream, these

thoughts, and these visions, a dream analyst will be utterly useless. A psychiatrist would also be as impotent as the Babylonian wise men in this matter. **These thoughts did not originate with Nebuchadnezzar. In no way can they be correlated with normal human experience. These were thoughts from God, and they were troubling to the king.**

Again, I want to emphasize the comfort this ministers to the hearts of those who suffer for righteousness’ sake, or are socially dominated by godless men. Those who witness for the Lord may appear unable to get through to those they address. But they must not become discouraged, or think their words lack

power because of their natural inabilities. There are two matters to consider. First, the Holy Spirit works in concert with the Word, and the testimony of those who have passed from death unto life (Heb 4:12; Rev 12:11). Second, the Lord has unfettered access to the minds of men, and can work with them as He wills. This is never to be viewed as a reason to move away from declaring to and reasoning with men. It does, however, give us good reason to hope, and to know our labors are not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor 15:58). **God can trouble people in their sleep! He can arrest their attention with clear and lucid thoughts, and dreams or visions that dominate their soul.** Our text is an example of this fact – and not the only one, at that.

ANOTHER DECREE

“⁶ Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.⁷ Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.”

As in the case of his first dream (“dreams,” 2:1,2), this was apparently a recurring dream (i.e., “thoughts” and “visions”, verse5). How long these “thoughts” and “visions” troubled the king, we do not know. This time, as the text will later affirm, the dream itself was known to the king, and he could describe it in detail. However, although sensing it bore an important message, he was unable to unravel or interpret it. Therefore, in the process of time, he sought help.

BRING IN ALL THE WISE MEN

“Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.” The king seems to have learned nothing from his previous experience. Instead of recalling the Divinely-bestowed ability of Daniel to interpret dreams, he did what he had always done before – call for the

“the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers” (2:2). They had proved inferior to Daniel and his companions earlier (1:20). They were powerless to reveal his first dream and interpretation (2:2-11). He had even

is born of flesh is flesh” (John 3:6). **The flesh gravitates to the flesh, seeking help from it, and relying upon its resources.** Regardless of the abundance of revelations given to it by God, its first recourse is never God. That is its nature,

THE FLESH GRAVITATES TO THE FLESH, SEEKING HELP FROM IT, AND RELYING UPON ITS RESOURCES. REGARDLESS OF THE ABUNDANCE OF REVELATIONS GIVEN TO IT BY GOD, ITS FIRST RECOURSE IS NEVER GOD. THAT IS ITS NATURE, AND IT IS UNCHANGEABLE.

issued a decree previously to kill all of these men (2:12). Daniel had previously reminded him of their utter worthlessness (2:27). He had declared *“there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets”* – particularly the ones Nebuchadnezzar had (2:28). In spite of all of this, he **first** called for these very men again, ignoring both the God of heaven and His prophet Daniel. Why?

Flesh Begets Flesh

Jesus put it this way: *“That which*

and it is unchangeable. This is involved in the expression, *“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil”* (Jer 13:23).

“Flesh,” or *“the natural man”* (1 Cor 2:14) cannot produce a spiritual thought, or willingly resort to God in the time of need. Any valid thought found in the mind of a carnal man, has been put there by God, just as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar. Any spiritually

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profitable word emitting from the flesh has also been produced by God, as in the case before us.

Recognition, But Not Retention

This does not mean there is no element of recognition in such people. Nebuchadnezzar recognized Daniel's wisdom. He saw the truth of his interpretation of the great image. He acknowledged God in the matter of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's deliverance from the furnace. **The point is he, like all flesh, could not retain the memories of God's dealings.** In this case, the flesh is like a broken cistern that can hold no water (Jer 2:13).

for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek 18:31). He knew they could not do it, so he also promised, *"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them"* (Ezek 36:27).

Flesh Resorts to Flesh

Thus, Nebuchadnezzar resorted to the Babylonian wise men because that is what he had a mind to **do**. **The revelations of God did not have a lasting impact upon his heart.** That is the nature of the flesh. That is why a

their previous experiences, even as Nebuchadnezzar forgot his.

This time the wise men were given an additional advantage. The king was able to relate his dream to them, point by point. How would their wisdom respond to this advantage? Would they be able to bluff their way through this challenge, or invent some interpretation of their own? Will their wisdom prove adequate for the occasion? Will their education make them sufficient for the requirement of the king? Will Nebuchadnezzar be able to get an answer – any kind of answer – from anyone but a representative of the *"God of heaven?"*

THEY COULD NOT MAKE IT KNOWN

"... but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof." Remember, this is the testimony of Nebuchadnezzar. He is recounting *"the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward"* him (v 2). **Part of that testimony is what the false prophets could NOT do, as well as what the God of heaven COULD do.**

MUCH OF THE SEEMINGLY INTERMINABLE PROBLEMS MODERN CHURCHES HAVE WITH THEIR MEMBERS IS OWING MORE TO THE LACK OF REGENERATION THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

The Case of Israel

We have an even more vivid portrayal of this fact in the nation of Israel. Even though they repeatedly experienced the first-hand deliverance of God, garnered miraculous supplies from Him, and saw manifestations of His Person, yet they *"forgot the Lord their God"* (Judges 3:7). They even *"kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in His law; and forgot His works, and His wonders that He had showed them"* (Psa 78:10-11). Their hearts were bent away from God, even though He had dealt so favorably with them – and they were powerless to change them.

Moses once challenged them, *"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked"* (Deu 10:16). They could not do it, so he promised, *"And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live"* (Deu 30:6).

Ezekiel also challenged Israel, *"make you a new heart and a new spirit:*

person *"must be born again"* (John 3:7), receive a *"new heart"* and a *"new spirit"* (Ezek 36:26). That is why the heart must be *"circumcised"* (Rom 2:29; (Col 2:12), and the individual become *"a new creation"* in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 5:17).

Much of the seemingly interminable problems modern churches have with their members is owing more to the lack of regeneration than anything else. Like Nebuchadnezzar professing Christians revert again and again to the flesh because there simply is nothing more to them. They need to be born again.

I TOLD THE DREAM

"Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers, and I told the dream before them..." The text does not indicate how these men felt about coming to the king. If they remembered their other encounters with the king, they doubtless would have had some reservations about appearing once again before him.

However, they were *"of the flesh"* also, and doubtless had likewise forgotten

After these men – trained and educated to do what the king required – had heard the dream, all of their wisdom departed from them. Their wisdom was *"foolishness with God"* (1 Cor 3:19), and thus dried up when faced with interpreting something God had made known. This did not occur by happenstance, God caused it to happen. **He saw to it that things were placed before them that they could not resolve. It is God's manner to do this.**

AN APPLICATION

It may be apparent from the experience of Nebuchadnezzar that **the world's wisdom cannot be employed to comprehend what God has revealed.** Still, there are numerous people within the church who continue to resort to the wisdom of this world to comprehend the Word of the Lord. The twin displays of worldly wisdom that has become very prominent in Christian circles are **hermeneutics** and **etymology** – the science of interpretation and the analyzation of the transmission of the meaning of words from one language to another. These are greatly honored among religious scholars. Yet, neither of

them require God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, reconciliation to God, or spiritual understanding. They are purely of man, through man, and to man – yet they are being given a high position in both Christian education and Biblical exposition.

Daniel, who had extensive

exposure to Babylon’s form of these approaches will use neither of them. He will not call the king to a consideration of a logical or scientific approach to his dream. Nor, indeed, will he resort to an analysis of any language that may have been involved in the dream. He will rise higher than such things can reach. Honest and good hearts cannot help but consider

this circumstance.

The people of God must learn to give the preeminent place to God in the matter of understanding what He gives and says. It is a sin of the greatest magnitude to seek understanding from the world of the things God has declared and given.

AT THE LAST DANIEL CAME IN

“^{8a} But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream . . . ”

AT THE LAST

“But at the last Daniel came in before me . . . ” If ever there was an example of the word, *“But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first”* (Mat 19:30), this is it. Daniel was “first” by Divine assessment, and “last” by the king’s assessment. In sequence, he was “last,” but in profitability he was “first.”

So far as the sequence is concerned, this is driven more by the Divine agenda than by Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian heart. God first gives the opportunity for the world’s wise men to solve the mystery. When their efforts prove vain, it brings His man forward to display both their foolishness and His wisdom.

This procedure brings glory to God, openly displaying that He is, in fact, *“God of gods and Lord of kings.”*

- ▣ When the Egyptian magicians ran out of power, Moses, the servant of God, kept on working *“signs and wonders”* (Ex 8:18).
- ▣ When Nebuchadnezzar had a fire heated so hot that those who threw those he condemned into that fire were killed, the Lord then delivered His men in and from that very fire (Dan 3:25-28).
- ▣ When a storm sapped the strength of

seasoned sailors, required that they throw valuable goods and even ship tackling overboard, and *“all hope”* that they could be saved was *“taken away,”* then the Lord raised up Paul

a mass spiritual graveyard – a valley of dry bones – in which everyone was *“dead in trespasses and sins”* (Eph 2:1). Of all the nations it was said, *“having no hope, and without God in the world”* (Eph 2:12).

SO FAR AS THE SEQUENCE IS CONCERNED, THIS IS DRIVEN MORE BY THE DIVINE AGENDA THAN BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S BABYLONIAN HEART. GOD FIRST GIVES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE WORLD’S WISE MEN TO SOLVE THE MYSTERY. WHEN THEIR EFFORTS PROVE VAIN, IT BRINGS HIS MAN FORWARD TO DISPLAY BOTH THEIR FOOLISHNESS AND HIS WISDOM.

to direct everyone to safety (Acts 27:22-44).

When we read the words, *“at the last Daniel came in,”* we are being introduced to the resolution of the dilemma, not a human effort to resolve it.

Principle Seen In Our Salvation

This very principle is seen in our salvation. Jesus came into this realm *“in the end of the world”* (Heb 9:26). **After men had tried to raise out of the muck of sin for 2,500 years without Law, and 1,500 years with Law, the Savior entered the domain of conflict.** After the best of human efforts, and an extended period in which to demonstrate any vestiges of wisdom that remained in them, the Divine assessment was, *“There is none righteous, no not one”* (Rom 3:10). The world proved to be

Just as in our text, it was then that the answer came.

Application

It may appear as though this all has very little to do with our text. But we must not allow such simplicity to dominate our minds. **The Lord still works in this manner, allowing the world’s wisdom about us to vainly parade before those seeking answers, just like the wise men came before Nebuchadnezzar.** They will not succeed in resolving any dilemma that has resulted from sin and alienation from God.

We must not settle for the assessment and conclusion of the worldly wise. Their word must not be considered the final word, any more than the magicians, astrologers, and Chaldeans had the last word in our text. It is time for the people of God to resort FIRST to *“the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”*

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(Eph 1:3).

WHOSE NAME WAS BELTESHAZZAR

“ . . . whose name was *Belteshazzar*, according to the name of my god.” There are only two places in all of the Scriptures where Daniel is actually addressed as “*Belteshazzar*.” Both of them are in this chapter, and are spoken by Nebuchadnezzar (vs 4 and 19). The rest of the time we are told that was his name – Babylonian name – (1:7; 2:26; 4:8,19; 5:12; 10:1). He was so identified during the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Cyrus.

confounded. “*Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded*” (Jer 50:2).

☐ Jeremiah also declares that God would punish Bel, delivering those he had captured, or swallowed up. “*And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall*” (Jer 51:44).

In his global proclamation,

THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLY GODS

“ . . . and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.” Other versions read, “in him is the Spirit of the holy God,”^{NKJV} “In him is a spirit of the holy gods,”^{NASB} “the spirit of the holy gods is with him,”^{NIV} and “who is endowed with a spirit of the holy gods.”^{NRSV}

It is clear from these words that Nebuchadnezzar knew Daniel served a real God – yet, he was not prepared to say He was “*the only true God*” (John 17:3). He was one of many, in the king’s mind, though He was superior to the others.

It is not clear what he meant by “*spirit of the holy gods*.” From his perspective, he did not have the understanding of the “*Spirit*” that is common among those in Christ Jesus. I will only say that Nebuchadnezzar seems to sense that the abilities Daniel possessed could not have come from man. They were, in every sense, supernatural, and thus he ascribed them to a spirit issuing forth from Deity. That is the very best the king could have meant. **The Divine light of that time did not shine bright enough to see as we do in the Lord Jesus.** How our hearts must rejoice for the things we have received! Truly, this is a better covenant.

YET, HE HELD FAST TO THE LORD, SERVING ONLY HIM. THIS HE DID WITHOUT POSSESSING CHRIST, RECONCILIATION TO GOD, THE NEW BIRTH, OR THE REMISSION OF SINS IN THE SENSE THEY ARE NOW POSSESSED. OUGHT WE NOT TO BE KNOWN FOR EVEN MORE FAITH AND CONSISTENCY THAN DANIEL, SEEING WE LIVE WITHIN “A BETTER COVENANT ESTABLISHED UPON BETTER PROMISES”

In a sense, this was a very humiliating name, for it meant “*Bel’s prince*,” or, “*whom Bel favors*.”^{MCCLINTOK STRONGCYCLOPIA} Some say it meant, “*may Bel protect his life*.”^{NELSON} All of them have the same basic meaning – it refers to one especially favored and protected by the idol Bel.

Both Isaiah and Jeremiah refer to this false god.

☐ Isaiah said Bel could not deliver, but himself went into captivity: “*Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity*” (Isa 46:1-2).

☐ Jeremiah referred to much the same thing, saying when Babylon was taken, or conquered, Bel was

Nebuchadnezzar declares Bel to be “*the name of MY god*.” With care, therefore, he does NOT say it was the name of Daniel’s God! Even though he gave Daniel this name, it had no impact upon Daniel’s character or religion. Perhaps he thought to contribute to a change in Daniel by giving him such a blasphemous name. But he did not. **Only God can so change a man that he is given a new name!**

This, then, is another thing Daniel overcame – his Babylonian name. He was in a foreign land, working for a heathen king, and given a heathen name. Yet, he held fast to the Lord, serving only him. This he did without possessing Christ, reconciliation to God, the new birth, or the remission of sins in the sense they are now possessed.

Ought we not to be known for even more faith and consistency than Daniel, seeing we live within “*a better covenant established upon better promises*” (Heb 8:6)?

For those who are walking in the light, much more in this event than Nebuchadnezzar saw. **The godly virtues and abilities resident in the saints of God are not the products of man.** They are not derived by human discipline, ardent study, or a power conferred upon them by their peers. Rather, they are the fruit of the Spirit, who Himself is given to the sons of God (Gal 4:6). **We ought to be able to recognize this circumstance more quickly and more thoroughly than the king of Babylon.**

An Observation

Nebuchadnezzar was like many of our day, who attempt to mingle the truth of God with the vanities of this world. In his case, he attempted to group the Living God with the dead idols of this world. **In our day, regular attempts are made to mingle the wisdom of the world with the wisdom of God.** It is even more wrong for such attempts to be made in this day of salvation, than it was for Nebuchadnezzar to make them in those

spiritually primitive times.

I TOLD THE DREAM

“ . . . and before him I told the

dream . . . ” This was different than the last time Daniel was before the king on the matter of a dream. Previously, the king could not recall the dream – not so

much as a single point of it or smallest aspect of it. This time, he will tell the dream in meticulous detail, for he has a ready recollection of it.

ADDRESSING DANIEL

“^{8b} . . . saying, ⁹ *O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.*” The king, who has been noted for flying into rages, speaks gently and respectfully to Daniel. Because the prophet’s ways have pleased the Lord, He has made “*even his enemies to be at peace with him*” (Prov 16:7). **There has been such a turn of events that the king is now dependent upon Daniel.** The Prophet is now the head, and the king is the tail (Deut 28:13). The Lord is certainly able to open great and effective doors to His people, and here He has opened one to his servant, Daniel.

MASTER OF THE MAGICIANS

“^{8b} . . . saying, ⁹ *O Belteshazzar,* Although the text does not say so, I cannot help but think Daniel shuddered when he was called “*Belteshazzar.*” His parents had given him the name “*Daniel,*” which means “*God is my Judge.*” Some say it means “*Judge of God,*” or one sent to make pronouncements in the name of the Lord. Imagine being called “*Bel’s protected servant.*” It would be like Paul being called “*the favored of Diana of the Ephesians.*” Notwithstanding, the prophet maintains godly composure, for his life does not revolve around himself, but the Lord who has called him to testify to the nations.

“ . . . *master of the magicians . . .* ”

Other versions read “*chief of the magicians,*” ^{NKJV,NASB,NIV} “*prince of diviners,*” ^{DOUAY} “*master of scribes,*” ^{DARBY} “*master of wonder-workers,*” ^{BBE} and “*master of enchanters,*” ^{SEPTUAGINT} As you can see, some translations accent the academic part, while others put the emphasis on the dark powers that motivated these men. Both views are correct, for they obtained their knowledge from dark and unlawful sources.

Following the interpretation of his first dream, Nebuchadnezzar had made Daniel “*the governor over all the wise men of Babylon*” (2:48). Some time after the events of the fourth chapter,

confound those who do not have faith in God.

Here again, Daniel is spoken to in language that is reproachful to him,

THERE IS A CONSISTENCY TO DIVINE BESTOWMENTS THAT MAKE THE INDIVIDUAL EQUAL TO ANYTHING ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR APPOINTED VOCATION. PAUL WOULD SAY IT THIS WAY, “I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHICH STRENGTHENETH ME”

Belshazzar’s queen said, “*There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers*” (Dan 5:11).

I have often thought how the magicians, astrologers, and soothsayers must have responded to their new “*chief.*” For them, it no doubt introduced an era of great restriction, for I cannot imagine Daniel allowing them to peddle their delusions among the people, or before the king, as long as he was able to stop it.

But let us look at this from the higher perspective. Promotion comes from the Lord – that is the express revelation of God (Psa 75:6; Dan 4:17). In this case, He gave the kingdoms of the world to a despot, and the magicians, astrologers, and soothsayers into the hands of a holy prophet. **There is certainly enough irony in those assignments to**

though probably complimentary in the mind of Nebuchadnezzar. It would be like calling David the “*chief of the priests of Dagon,*” or Josiah the “*master over the priests of the high places.*” I continue to marvel at the resilience of Daniel. It is no wonder the Lord opened such a great door to him. He was able conduct himself in such a manner as to bring glory to God.

Thus, two wounding references are made, doubtless intended by the devil to make Daniel act rashly. We will find, however, that Satan’s will was utterly frustrated.

THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLY GODS

“^{9c} . . . *because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee . . .*” As I have already mentioned, mentioned, this was Nebuchadnezzar’s way of saying Daniel was somehow linked to Deity. The king saw him as more than a man, invested with power and ability by one of the many gods he recognized. He say men “*as trees walking*” (Mark 8:24).

NO SECRET TROUBLE THEE

“^{9d} . . . *and no secret troubleth thee . . .*” Other versions read, “*no*

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mystery baffles you,"^{NASB} "no mystery is too difficult for you,"^{NIV} and "no mystery is too great for you to solve."^{NLT} Even Nebuchadnezzar knew this was not a

There is a consistency to Divine bestowments that make the individual equal to anything associated with their appointed

and literature of the Chaldeans. He handled increased responsibility well also, so that God was honored in all that he did. That is why God was forward to reveal secrets to him. Daniel was trustworthy, a good steward, and faithful to his God.

HE MANAGED HIS EDUCATION IN A WAY THAT HONORED GOD, NEVER BECOMING DEFILED BY THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF THE CHALDEANS. HE HANDLED INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY WELL ALSO, SO THAT GOD WAS HONORED IN ALL THAT HE DID.

His experience was much like that of Paul, who said, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because **He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry**"^{NKJV} (1 Tim 1:12)

TELL ME THE DREAM!

^{9e} . . . tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof." The NIV reads "Here is my dream; interpret it for me." Other versions read, "Hear the dream that I saw; tell me its interpretation,"^{NRSV} and "this is the dream I have had; tell me what it means."^{NJB}

natural ability. Daniel had previously told him this power was not the result of natural aptitude. "But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living" (Dan 2:30).

vocation. Paul would say it this way, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"(Phil 4:13). For him, that involved not only profound teaching, but learning contentment, knowing how to handle abasement, and how to abound, or handle surplus. **God's appointment are accompanied by His enablements.**

Thus we come to the conclusion of this section, with Nebuchadnezzar ready to relate his dream to Daniel. He expects Daniel to have its meaning, because he has come to know him. He has also been introduced to his God. Although he is not thoroughly familiar with "the God of heaven," he knows there is no god to compare with Him.

All of our exposure to the wise men of Babylon confirms that nearly everything out of the ordinary was most difficult for them, if not impossible. How well the king knew this. But Daniel was not in that category. Notice the consistency of Daniel's ministry. **No mystery was too difficult for him. No challenge brought his Divinely bestowed ability to the ground.**

Daniel had also been a faithful steward. He had handled his captivity to the glory of God. He handled his diet well, not allowing himself to be defiled with the food of the king. He managed his education in a way that honored God, never becoming defiled by the language

CONCLUSION

All of these things have been the working of the Lord. He is shuffling people here and there, arranging circumstances in order to reveal Himself and how He works. None of these events have just happened. They have been so orchestrated as to cause Daniel to rise above all others, excelling in matters desired by the king.

so.

A PRINCIPLE TO BE SEEN

There is a principle to be seen here. God works in such a way as brings glory to Himself, not to men. If men are in any way honored, it is only because they are associated with and working for Him. It is their identity with God that brings any glory at all to them.

together in one in Christ (Eph 1:7-10), and making men righteous (Rom 1:17). For those who believe the record God has given of His Son, nothing about this purpose is not to be desired.

In view of this men are to be encouraged to lay hold on what God offers – to apprehend that for which they have been apprehended. There is every reason to be expectant in such a pursuit.

Even more than that, these are events in which God is making known His own determinations. He is showing them to be irreversible and unable to be impeded by men. This dream will not announce what Nebuchadnezzar ought to do, but what he **will** do. God will cause the king to do something he does not want to do. He will be forced to do it. It will require a bold and faithful man to declare it, and that is precisely who will do

God's purpose, and His alone, drives everything He says and does. This is a grand purpose – one that brings salvation to men in this world, and a reign with Jesus in the world to come. The news of this purpose is called "glad tidings" (Acts 13:32), "Gospel" (Rom 1:18), and "the word of life" (Phil 2:16). It speaks of the absolute destruction of Satan (Heb 2:154), the gathering of everything

It is also good for all to learn to conduct their lives in such a way that people make a connection between them and the God of heaven. If no such association can be made, one's life has been lived in vain. Furthermore, If God is not glorified because of us, we have nothing to commend us to Him.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 7/12/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, covering verses 10-28 of the fourth chapter. The lesson is titled, **"THE SECOND DREAM AND ITS INTERPRETATION."** After recounting his dream to Daniel, the prophet is greatly perplexed for a time. Daniel then foretells a lengthy period to time during which the Lord would greatly humble the king. He then urged the king to cease from his sinning and provide for the poor. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

*The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, Jonathan, and Eva
406 South Bergeant Street, Joplin, MO 64801*

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Telephone: (417) 782-3063, Email: Given (GivenB@aol.com) June: (JuneE01@aol.com)

ADAH's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/adah.htm> -- EVA's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/Eva.htm>

Benjamin (Bensvison@aol.com), Jonathan (Jonstalk@aol.com), Eva (Evablakely@aol.com)
Adah Hutchcraft (ALHutchcraft@hotmail.com), Jason Hutchcraft (hutchcraftj@esr.edu)

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>
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