



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 10



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version, BBE=Bible in Basic English, BRA=Breitengarten, 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 RESPONDS TO THE INTERPRETATION

Dan 2:46-49 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. ⁴⁷ The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. ⁴⁸ Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king. ^{KJV} (Dan 2:46-49)

INTRODUCTION

Commencing with this chapter, the thrust of this book has been more finely tuned. At the first, our attention was turned to the chastening of Israel by the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, God's "servant" (1:1-2; Jer 27:6). Next, the Spirit introduced us to the four children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, and the initial test of their faith (1:3-17). Their first introduction to the king is then covered, together with the manifestation of the superior wisdom and knowledge God had given to them (1:18-20). At that point, our attention was drawn to a recurring and troubling dream

that Nebuchadnezzar experienced, together with his efforts to have the dream and its interpretation identified. **Now, at this point, Daniel becomes the most prominent man** (2:1-35).

Now, commencing with the interpretation of this dream, our minds have been turned to the God in heaven. It is His purpose that now becomes dominant, and His work that is most prominent. For the first time, the superiority of God is declared to the king.

▣ "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for

the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory" (2:37).

▣ "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" (2:44).

▣ "... the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain,

OUTLINE

- ▶ REAL HUMILITY (2:46a)
- ▶ THE RESPECT OF DANIEL (2:46b)
- ▶ OF A TRUTH (2:47a)
- ▶ LORD OF KINGS (2:47b)
- ▶ A REVEALER OF SECRETS (2:47c)
- ▶ DANIEL IS MADE A GREAT MAN (2:48)
- ▶ A REQUEST FOR HIS COMPANIONS (2:49)

and the interpretation thereof sure.” (2:45).

From verse 46 through 12:13, “God” is mentioned **forty-six times** (2:47; 3:17,25,26,28,29; 4:2,8,9,19; 5:311, 14,18,21,23,26; 6:5; 10,11,16,20,22,23,26; 9:3,4,9,10,11,13,14,15,17,18,19,20; 10:12; 11:32,36,37)! He becomes the prominent Person of reference in the book. Although “Daniel” himself is mentioned fifty-two times, nearly all of them have to do with him being God’s prophet and representative. His prominence is strictly owing to his identity with the God of heaven.

While this may appear to be a rather simplistic observation, it is imperative that we do not ignore it. Much that is written in this book has intrigued Bible students. Because they have been distracted with its seeming novelties, some have tended to develop theological and eschatological views that have little to do with God. **These views have tended to vaunt the wisdom of men, induce fear in the hearts of men, and have been largely limited to political concerns.** However, Daniel was not inspired to merely give a panorama of earthly history, or elaborate upon worldly governments. **Apart from the Kingdom of God, which is destined to destroy all other dominions, the kingdoms of this world have no relevance at all.** The ONLY reason they are even mentioned is because they are inferior to God’s kingdom, and will be shown to be so.

A RELIGIOUS ERROR

Those who imagine worldly kingdoms will continue on after God’s people have been removed from the earth

have failed to see this truth. Believers are “the salt of the earth” (Matt 5:13), and without them, the earth has no relevance whatsoever.

The Parable of the Tares of the Field

The children of God are the whole reason for the existence of the earth. Our Lord made this plain in the parable of the “parable of the tares of the field.” Jesus likened the Kingdom of heaven to “a man which sowed good seed in HIS FIELD” (Matt 13:24). He encapsulated the whole of the parable in these words. “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.”^{NASB} (Matt 13:37-39). His explanations are so clear, there can be no question about their meaning.

- ▶ Both tares and wheat – the sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one – will “grow together until the harvest,” which is “the end of the world”^{KJV} (13:30a).
- ▶ At the “harvest,” the angels, who are “the reapers,” are sent forth to reap the earth, being told, “Gather ye together FIRST the tares” (13:30b).
- ▶ The “harvest” is also the time when “the wheat” are gathered into the barn of the sower (13:30c).
- ▶ In explaining the parable to His inquiring disciples, Jesus spoke of the wicked and righteous being together until the end, when they will be separated. “The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling

blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”^{NASB} (13:41-42). The words “His kingdom” refer to “his field,” mentioned in the parable. The wicked will be removed from the presence of the righteous, not visa versa. They will be gathered “first” out of Christ’s Kingdom, for they are the offenders and the ones who do not belong in the field, or among the righteous.

- ▶ It is THEN that “the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (13:43).

The Parable of the Great Net

Again, Jesus likened “the kingdom of heaven” to a “net that was cast into the sea.” The net gathered all manner of fish, and was drawn into shore when it was full. At that point, the “bad” were “cast away,” while, at the same time, the “good” were gathered into vessels.

Our Lord immediately gave an explanation of this brief parable, showing it emphasizes the very point He had just made concerning “the tares of the field.”

“So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked **from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth**” (Matt 13:47-50). **Again note, the wicked were removed from among the justified ones, and not the righteous from them, as some teach.**

After both of His explanations had been given, Jesus asked His disciples, “Have ye understood all these things?” They answered that they did (13:51). We do well to understand them also, for what

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our Lord said is highly disruptive of some very popular theology.

THE RELEVANCE OF THIS

All of this has a great deal to do with our text. The “*Kingdom*” of which Jesus spoke in Matthew thirteen, is the very kingdom Daniel declared would be “*set up*” in the days of the world’s greatest and most influential kingdoms. **The demise of those kingdoms was but a prelude to the final removal of all of the wicked – those who do not willingly serve God.** The very principles taught in the parables of the

LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psa 24:1).

The wicked will not always be with us, praise the Lord. They will be pulled up out of this world at precisely the same time those who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord are gathered together, to forever be with the Lord (1 Thess 4:17). If there is any doubt about this matter, it is even further clarified in Second Thessalonians; There, the destruction of the wicked, and when it will occur, are precisely delineated. “*And to*

believe” (2 Thess 1:7-10).

While the wicked will not always be among the righteous, as long as they are in this world, **the righteous will always be with them.** If that was not the case, there is no sense to the parables of the tares and the net, or the plain declaration of Second Thessalonians 1:7-10). A great deal of contemporary teaching concerning the coming of Christ fails to consider this circumstance. Consequently a great deal of confusion has resulted, as well as a near-total lack of preparation for the coming of the Lord. This is a most serious condition.

We will now see that even Nebuchadnezzar, who worshiped and served other gods, was able to glean this principle from Daniel’s inspired interpretation. Those who are not able to see it, even though they may wear the name of Jesus, have stooped beneath the ignorance of a heathen king.

To further complicate things, they have done so even though inspired explanations have been given. Further, those in Christ have the Holy Spirit, whom Nebuchadnezzar did not possess, and personal access to the fountain of all wisdom, which he also did not have. To be ignorant of the power and majesty of the Lord is a most serious error, for it has trampled on the words of Jesus and the exposition of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Popular or not, such views are in error, and cannot be true. Those in Christ must be able to comprehend the truth more rapidly than Nebuchadnezzar.

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It is not possible for the devil and his children to make it so intolerable for the righteous that they must be altogether removed. **That would make the field his, which it emphatically is not!** In precisely the same sense that the field belonged to the Sower of the seed, who is “*the Son of man,*” so “*The earth is the*

you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; WHEN HE SHALL COME to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that

REAL HUMILITY

“ ^{2:46a} *Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshiped Daniel . . .* ” The response of Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel’s message is most extraordinary. There is certainly no casualness about it. Daniel’s words are not treated as a mere novelty, as the Athenians considered various presentations in the Areopagus, including that of Paul the Apostle (Acts 17:19-21).

PRE-CHRISTIAN TIMES

As we view this response, it is imperative that we remember the period of time in which it occurred. This was not an age in which the blazing light of “*the glorious Gospel of the blessed God*” (1 Tim 1:11) was shining. The knowledge of God was, at the very best, introductory. This was particularly true in the case of Nebuchadnezzar. He will not respond as one who was acquainted with the Living God. His response will be comely, yet wholly inappropriate from the standpoint

of greater spiritual light.

Circumstances Before Christ

Without a proper understanding of the times before Christ, it is not unusual to hear questions and speculations about the saints prior to the New Covenant.

- Why did earlier saints often have multiple wives?
- Was king Saul saved?

- ▣ How could God love Jacob?
- ▣ Will Solomon be in heaven or hell?
- ▣ Why did Solomon have so many wives and concubines?
- ▣ Why was there such heartless bloodshed in Israel’s confrontation of their enemies?
- ▣ Why did God command the killing of infants among the heathen?

These, and similar questions, are resolved by an understanding of the times. The knowledge of God was sparse in those days, and thus the actions of men – even those who were approved of God – fell woefully short of life as it is in Christ Jesus. In the words of Scripture, or to put in *“words that the Holy Spirit teaches”* (1 Cor 2:13), *“God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect”* (Heb 11:40). The people in question were not born again, and had not been delivered from the kingdom of darkness or translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col 1:13). Their deficiencies were not owing to any inferiority in their character, but the covenant, or lack thereof, under which they lived. The Old Covenant was *“not of faith”* (Gal 3:12), and therefore did not yield the results of the covenant being administered by the exalted Christ – *“a better covenant, which was established upon better promises”* (Heb 8:6).

An inferior covenant produced inferior results. This was not owing to a flaw in the covenant itself, but those with whom it was made. As it is written, *“For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant . . .”* (Heb 8:8). The Old Covenant did not change human nature. It did not grant a new heart of flesh, nor remove the old heart of stone. It relied wholly upon the abilities of those with whom it was made, and was therefore *“weak through the flesh”* (Rom 8:3).

It should not surprise us, therefore, if crude manners were often found among those of prior times. All of this does not even take into consideration times before the Law, when there was even less understanding. If it is true that *“in Thy light shall we see light”* (Psa 36:9), then wherever the knowledge of God is less, a proper sense of values is proportionately diminished. Under such

circumstances, responses to revelation will occur that are vastly inferior to those that take place in the superior light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus (2 Cor 4:6).

The Relevance of these Observations

I have taken the time to make these brief comments because of the text before us. Actions will take place that do not make sense in the greater light of the Gospel of Christ, and the knowledge of God that is experienced in Him. However, even though the actions themselves are inappropriate for a person in Christ, much is to be learned from them. We will see that **an acute consciousness of Deity can be experienced with relatively little illumination.** All of this will serve

- ▣ When the eyes of Balaam were opened, and he saw the angel that was about to destroy him, he *“fell flat on his face”* (Num 22:31).
- ▣ When Joshua saw a mighty angel, described as *“captain of the host of the Lord,”* he *“fell on his face to the earth”* (Josh 5:14).
- ▣ Joseph’s brothers fell on their faces before him, confessing they were his servants (Gen 50:16).
- ▣ When Ruth confronted Boaz, she fell on her face before him, asking why she had obtained such favor (Ruth 2:10).

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FELL ON HIS FACE

“Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face . . .” This very language sounds strange in our Western culture. We live in a society that promotes purely personal interests and sings the song of self-worth. **However, we must take great care not to read the Word of God with our culture in mind.** When it comes to pillars of society, such as respect and honor, our age is vastly inferior to that of the patriarchs of old.

The expression *“fell on his face”* describes one falling to a prostrate position with the face toward the ground. It was a posture of profound respect, esteem, and honor.

- ▣ Abram *“fell on his face”* when God talked with him (Gen 17:3).

- ▣ When David saw his close friend Jonathan, he *“fell on his face to the ground”* (1 Sam 20:41).
- ▣ When Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, confronted David, *“he fell on his face”* (2 Sam 9:6).
- ▣ Abigail fell on her face before king David (1 Sam 25:23).
- ▣ When Obadiah, who hid a hundred prophets in a cave from the wrath of Jezebel, met Elijah, he fell on his face before him (1 Kings 18:7).
- ▣ When Peter, James, and John heard the voice of God on the mount of transfiguration, *“they fell on their face, and were sore afraid”* (Matt 17:6).
- ▣ When a man full of leprosy saw Jesus, he *“fell on his face”* before Him,

asking to be made clean (Lk 5:12).

- ☐ When Jesus was in the garden, pouring out His soul, He *“fell on His face, and prayed”* (Matt 26:39). He was acknowledging the greatness and superiority of His Father.
- ☐ Paul spoke of a stranger, unacquainted with the ways of the Lord, coming into an assembly where *“all prophesy.”* As the intentions of his heart were revealed in that environment, the stranger would be seen *“falling down on his face”* (1 Cor 14:25).

There is a level of sensitivity

“worshiped” (רָצַח) is used only by Daniel (2:46; 3:5,6,7,10,11,12,14,15,18,28). It means to prostrate oneself, do homage, or worship, and is applied to both idolatry (3:5-7,10-12,14-16) and the worship of the true God (3:28).

Why Did Daniel Allow This?

One may well wonder why Daniel did not object to the king’s action. After all, when Cornelius *“fell down”* at Peter’s feet and worshiped him, Peter *“took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man”* (Acts 10:26). When John the beloved twice prostrated himself before a holy angel, the angel admonished him, *“See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that*

Yet, when John was on the Isle of Patmos, he was rebuked for prostrating himself before an angel. For some, these may appear to be gross contradictions. In some instances, people fell down before men, and it was received. Others fell down before a holy angel, and were not rebuked. After Christ, neither were allowed. Why?

The Explanation

This text, as well as a few others, have proved very confusing to many notable Bible scholars. They view such actions as sinful on the part of those who committed them, as well as on the part of those who received them – like Daniel.

A similar, but not identical, incident occurred in the life of Joseph. When he confronted his brothers in Egypt, he demanded that they return to him, bringing their younger brother, Benjamin. Of course, they were not aware that Joseph was speaking to them, but viewed him only as an Egyptian dignitary. Joseph’s demand was couched in language that would be unacceptable in Christ. *“Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither”* (Gen 42:15). It is not proper to assess Joseph’s words as though he lived in the bright light of the knowledge of God, as experienced in the New Covenant. He lived even before the Law, and is not to be judged as though he possessed what may only be had in Christ. I understand that motives, as well as understanding, are involved in this case.

IN ALL THREE OF THESE INSTANCES, THE PHYSICAL ACT OF PROSTRATION BEFORE A SERVANT OF GOD, WHETHER MAN OR ANGEL, WAS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. WHY WAS IT ALLOWED IN OUR TEXT?

that moves one to acknowledge personal inferiority. While such a practice is not common in our prideful society, it has not been strange throughout God’s dealings with humanity.

Some Conclusions

At once we see, therefore, that Nebuchadnezzar saw the gravity of the revelation he had just heard. Although a king – the greatest king in the earth – he prostrated himself before Daniel without hesitation. **He was acknowledging a superior man with a superior message.**

He obviously, and rightly so, associated that revelation with *“the God of heaven,”* of whom Daniel had spoken.

WORSHIPED DANIEL

“ . . . and worshiped Daniel . . . ” Other versions read, *“and did homage to Daniel,”* ^{NASB} *“and paid him honor,”* ^{NIV} *“done obeisance,”* ^{YLT} and *“gave worship to Daniel.”* ^{BBE}

The word that is here translated

have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10), and *“See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God”* (Rev 22:9).

In all three of these instances, the physical act of prostration before a servant of God, whether man or angel, was strictly forbidden. Why was it allowed in our text?

Additional cases occurring prior to Christ may here be considered.

- ☐ Balaam prostrated himself before an angel and was not rebuked (Num 22:31).
- ☐ Manoah and his wife, parents of Samson, prostrated themselves before an ascending angel, and were not rebuked (Judges 13:20).
- ☐ David prostrated himself before an angel, and was not rebuked (1 Chron 21:16).

The answer to these things is found in our previous consideration of “Pre-Christian Times.” **Prior to Christ, the knowledge of God was at a very low level – even among those in covenant with Him.** The prostration of people before men and angels was part of the *“ignorance”* – ignorance of God – graciously overlooked by Him. As it is written, *“In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent”* ^{NIV} (Acts 17:30).

Prior to Christ, no person was ever rebuked for prostrating himself before another man, or before a holy angel. That fact, however, by no means suggests such actions were acceptable to God. They were the result of an ignorance of God, for **men simply cannot**

respond to a word or deed of God correctly when they do not know Him. Now, however, in this day of salvation and the blazing light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ Jesus, an ignorance of God is unacceptable. We are not living in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and we had better not conduct ourselves as though we were, or even in manners that are beneath his responses.

Since Jesus has been exalted, God is more fully known. In fact, unlike the Old Covenant, within the New Covenant everyone knows God, where under the Old, very few did – and even then, their knowledge was only introductory. It is said of the New Covenant, *“And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest”* (Heb 8:11).

Thus, because Nebuchadnezzar lived in a time of sparse revelation, and, at best, the introductory knowledge of God, he conducted himself in an inferior manner. However, even then, his action was driven by the awareness of one greater than himself.

A MAGNIFICENT MESSAGE SEEN

The magnificence of the message Daniel delivered was, in measure, grasped by Nebuchadnezzar. Immediately, he associated it with Deity, and humbled himself before the messenger. In this way

he acknowledged his own mortality and inferiority.

Our age has lost this perception. Academics have actually

One can sense the near-total absence of the awareness of Christ's superiority, and the excelling glory of the Gospel. With no apparent twinge of conscience, professed *Christian* teachers

OUR AGE HAS LOST THIS PERCEPTION. ACADEMICS HAVE ACTUALLY NEUTERED THE WORD OF GOD IN GENERAL, AND THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IN PARTICULAR. PEOPLE CAN HEAR THE REPORT OF THE MAGNIFICENT WORKINGS OF GOD WITHOUT ANY APPARENT IMPACT UPON THEIR SPIRIT.

neutered the Word of God in general, and the Gospel of Christ in particular. People can hear the report of the magnificent workings of God without any apparent impact upon their spirit. They can hear of the exceeding great and precious promises of God, and remain unmoved by their grandeur. I greatly fear that the *Christianity* many have embraced has actually inoculated them against spiritual sensitivity. **In such a condition, they have stooped beneath the predisposition of Nebuchadnezzar the king, who was a heathen, without the knowledge of God.** This is a most serious state, indicating we are in a great falling away!

can make families, country, church growth, and the likes, their emphasis. Portions of Scripture that declare and expound the Gospel are abandoned in favor of Proverbs and Ecclesiastics, or texts that deal with the interrelationships of men. It is not that these things are wrong, and none should conclude that they are. However, they are to be considered within the greater light of the Gospel of Christ, and not in isolation from it. Let me state this another way.

Those who are not expert in the Gospel, cannot, by virtue of that lack, be expert in anything else. They have no light to see.

THE RESPECT OF DANIEL

^{46b} . . . **and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto him.** Other versions read, *“ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him,”* ^{NIB} *“gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense,”* ^{NAS} *“commanded that they should offer in sacrifice to him victims and incense,”* ^{DOUAY} and *“he commanded his people to offer sacrifices and burn sweet incense before him.”* ^{NLT}

Some commentators have a great deal of difficulty with this text – particularly because it contains no further

explanations. It obviously does not conform to the greater understanding that we have in Christ Jesus. Some have concluded the text does not tell the whole story, but eliminates Daniel's response. ^{BARNES} Another suggests that we must assume Daniel rejected the king's order, else he was guilty of sin. ^{CALVIN} Still another suggests that Daniel must have reasoned with the king concerning the impropriety of offering sacrifices and incense to him. ^{JOHN GILL} Another declares that no inspired writer would have written of a holy prophet receiving sacrifices and incense. ^{J.E.H. THOMPSON}

Here again, we confront an action that is strictly forbidden under the Gospel of Christ. On one occasion, when Paul and Barnabas were preaching in Lystra, Paul saw a man *“cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked.”* It is written that Paul perceived this man *“had faith to be healed.”* The man had fastened his attention upon Paul, and was listening intently to him. Suddenly Paul shouted out in a loud voice, *“Stand upright on thy feet!”* Immediately, the man *“leaped and walked.”* When the people saw *“what Paul had done”* they concluded, *“The gods are come down to us in the likeness of*

men.” They then referred to Barnabas as Jupiter (Zeus), and Paul as Mercurius (Hermes), because he was the chief speaker. The local priest of Jupiter, or Zeus, “brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.” As soon as “the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein” (Acts 14:7-15).

Once again, I want to emphasize the superiority of the revelation that has been brought to us through Christ Jesus. The Son of God did not come to provide more precisely defined morality. Nor, indeed, did He come to provide mankind with a new set of rules. From the standpoint of provision, He came to “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb 9:26). Considered from yet another perspective, He came to “bring us to God” (1 Pet 3:18). From yet another view, it was to expound and clarify the Father.

▣ “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the

▣ “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, **He hath declared Him.**” (John 1:18)

▣ “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. **Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake.**” (John 14:10-11)

One of the primary ministries of Jesus is to dispel the ignorance of God, such as prevailed during the times of Daniel. Prior to Moses, that ignorance was at an even more extensive level – and Nebuchadnezzar was woefully ignorant of the Law, which was “given by Moses” (John 1:17).

AN OBSERVATION

Our view of this text must not impeach the integrity and faith of Daniel. Neither must it allow us to diminish the significance of Nebuchadnezzar’s response. The king made an association between Daniel and his God. He did not consider Daniel himself to be God, as those in Lystra considered Paul and Barnabas. We will see from his statement that while he did highly regard Daniel, he was the more impressed with his great God. We must, then, allow the words of Nebuchadnezzar to interpret what he ignorantly did.

OUR VIEW OF THIS TEXT MUST NOT IMPEACH THE INTEGRITY AND FAITH OF DANIEL. NEITHER MUST IT ALLOW US TO DIMINISH THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S RESPONSE.

Why was the response of Paul and Barnabas apparently different than that of Daniel – if, indeed, it was? I suggest it was owing to the lesser spiritual light in Daniel’s day. That does not make what occurred there right – it does make it tolerable for the time, allowing God to “wink at,” or overlook it.

THE SUPERIORITY OF LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST

Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” (Mat 11:27)

▣ “All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and **he to whom the Son will reveal Him.**” (Luke 10:22)

OF A TRUTH

^{47a} **The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods . . .**” How will the king respond to the inspired interpretation of the dream given to him by the God that is “in heaven?” He has heard about the demise of his own kingdom – that it will be replaced by a kingdom inferior to his own. He has heard that he is like a head of gold that will be supplanted by a kingdom likened to a breast and arms of silver. Will he lash out against Daniel, or order his death?

THE KING ANSWERED

“The king answered unto Daniel.”

First, note the king responds to what was told him. He does not remain in silence, and for that he is to be commended. When Elijah challenged the people to choose that very day who they would serve, Baal or God, “the people answered him not a word” (1 Kgs 18:21). When God called out to Israel through their prophets, they did not respond: “I called you, but ye answered not” (Jer 7:13). Does this condition still exist?

Nebuchadnezzar the heathen will provide an excellent example for all who are made aware of the purpose of God. He was told of the demise of four world empires, starting with his own. We have been told of the ultimate overthrow of all kingdoms, all flesh, all enemies, and all who compete with God. We do well to not allow Nebuchadnezzar to be more excellent in his response that we, who are living in the brilliance of the “Sun of righteousness,” who has arisen “with healing in His wings” (Mal 4:2).

OF A TRUTH

“ . . . *Of a truth . . .* ” Other versions read, “*Truly*”^{NKJV} “*Surely*,”^{NASB} “*verily*,”^{DOUAY} and “*indeed*.”^{NJB} This is another way of saying, “There is no doubt about it,” or “I do not question what you have said,” or “I can see the truth of what you have declared!”

And what sort of evidence did the king have? He had a dream that he could not remember on his own. He heard a man of God tell him the dream that he had, refreshing his mind with the vividness of it all. He also had a word – and only a word – that delineated the dream, telling the king what it meant. Daniel did not work a sign before him like Moses did before Pharaoh (Ex 7:9-10). There was no fleece spread before Nebuchadnezzar like Gideon spread before the Lord (Judges 6:37-39). There was no remarkable phenomenon, such as occurred on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), or in Samaria (Acts 8:6), or in Lystra (Acts 14:10). No miracles were wrought by the hand of Daniel as with Stephen, who was full of faith and power (Acts 6:8). No one in the king’s court was healed, as Publius on the island of Melita (Acts 28:8). There was no lame man at his gate to attest to the truth, as the one who was healed at the gate called “*Beautiful*” (Acts 3:2-7). **Yet, the response of Nebuchadnezzar will exceed some of the responses following those great miracles.**

Here was a haughty man reduced to humility and the confession of the greatness of God. That is how powerful the Word of God is!

Those who have an inordinate penchant for miracles will have to account for the response of Nebuchadnezzar. He said these things before Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered from the fiery furnace (3:23-26). There had been no dramatic miracle wrought before the king at this point. Yet, the words of Daniel were accompanied with such power, that the king gave forth a response that honored God and affirmed the godliness of Daniel.

The Power of the Gospel

I cannot help but note here the notable and more excellent power of the Gospel of Christ. If the relating of a

dream, and the interpretation of it brought Nebuchadnezzar to such a profound conclusion, what will the Gospel of Christ do for those who receive it? It, and it alone, is “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom 1:16). **When it is preached with power, if it does not elicit a response that is even better than that of the king of idol-worshipping Babylon, a most serious deficiency exists in the people.**

God was working with this heathen king, showing him things that precious few people in the previous history of the world had seen, much less of which they had been convinced.

Inherent in this expression is the idea that God is against all false gods. He will eventually dash them all to the ground, for they are against Him, His Son, and His people.

EVEN THOUGH PEOPLE HAVE HEARD A MESSAGE THAT IS FAR SUPERIOR TO THAT WHICH DELIVERED TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR, HIS RESPONSE SO FAR TRANSCENDS THE AVERAGE REACTION TO THE GOSPEL THAT IT IS FEARFUL TO CONSIDER IT.

I say these things because of circumstances with which most of us are familiar. Even though people have heard a message that is far superior to that which delivered to Nebuchadnezzar, his response so far transcends the average reaction to the Gospel that it is fearful to consider it.

GOD OF GODS

“ . . . *that your God is a God of gods . . .* ” Every translation reads precisely the same: “*God of gods*.” Moses also referred to God in this way. “*For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords . . .* ” (Deu 10:17). Joshua also spoke of the Lord in this manner. “*The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods . . .* ” (Josh 22:22). The “*sweet Psalmist of Israel*” wrote, “*O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever*” (Psa 136:2). Later, in further unveiling the future to Daniel, a heavenly prince referred to God as “*the God of gods*” (11:36).

This is, then, an inspired view – a heavenly perspective. **Yet, Nebuchadnezzar, who was hardly noted for being heavenly minded, referred to God in this manner – the same manner as Moses, Joshua, and David.** There is no doubt in my mind that

What gods?

There is a sense in which there are really no other gods. Is it not written, “*Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any*” (Isa 44:8). Again it is written, “*Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God*” (Isa 44:6). And again, “*I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me*” (Isa 45:5). And again, “*I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me*” (Isa 46:9).

These expressions speak of the nature of God – that there is none other who are self-existent, possess all power, and do their own will without anyone being able to stop its fulfillment. **There are no other Gods in that sense – none who are worthy of service, and who alone can save and destroy, create darkness and light, and bring calamity or blessing** (Isa 45:7).

However, there ARE “*other gods*,” even though none of them are equal to the true God. The phrase “*other gods*” is mentioned sixty three times in Scripture (Ex 20:3; 23:13; Deut 5:7; 6:14; 7:4; 8:19; 11:16,28; 13:2,6,13; 17:3; 18:20; 28:14,36,64; 29:26; 30:17; 31:18,20; Josh

23:16; 24:2,16; Judges 2:12,17,19; 10:13; 1 Sam 8:8; 26:19; 1 Kgs 9:6,9; 11:4,10; 14:9; 2 Kgs 5:17; 17:7,35,37,38; 22:17; 2 Chron 7:19,22; 28:25; 34:25; Jer 1:16; 7:6,9,18; 11:10; 13:10; 16:11,13; 19:4,13; 22:9; 25:6; 32:29; 35:15; 44:3,5,8,15; Hos 3:1).

The Corinthians Church

The Corinthian church had some members who were not yet aware there was only one true God. Still juvenile in their faith, they thought there were other God's who were competitors with the Living God – in some sense equal to Him. Addressing this situation Paul wrote, *“For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as **there be gods many, and lords many,**) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him. **Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge:** for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an*

*provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. **They sacrificed to demons, not to God, To gods they did not know, To new gods, new arrivals That your fathers did not fear**”^{NKJV} (Deu 32:17). Again, it is said of Rehoboam, *“Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, **for the demons,** and the calf idols which he had made”*^{NKJV} (2 Chr 11:15). The Psalmist wrote, *“They even sacrificed their sons And their daughters **to demons**”*^{NKJV} (Psa 106:37). The book of Revelation also records this dreadful idolatry. *“But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not **worship demons,** and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk”*^{NKJV} (Rev 9:20).*

There is a very real spiritual underworld, dominated by powerful, yet inferior personalities. The Spirit informs

God of heaven is over all of these powers. They answer to Him and are controlled to the most minute degree by Him. None of them can exist one millisecond longer than He intends, or work one tiny deed that He does not allow. He is over them all, and they are neither able to resist Him or impose their will upon Him.

The very casting of Satan out of heaven confirms this to be the case. All of these *“gods,”* who, in the fullest sense of the word, are no gods at all, are under the immediate auspices of the devil. They are not stronger than him, and function under his leadership. Yet, with no difficulty whatsoever, the devil has been cast out of heaven and *“into the earth.”* To confirm his utter inferiority, it was not even God Himself that cast him out, but *“Michael and his angels,”* who are willing servants of the true God (Rev 12:7-9). On one occasion, when the Gospel was beginning to spread, and Satan's kingdom was being assaulted, the Lord Jesus said, *“I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven”* (Luke 10:18). The Lord is *“the God of gods.”* Nebuchadnezzar knew it,. And we do well to know it also.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

One of the qualities of truth is its application, or relevance. There is not truth for you and truth for me, or truth for the first century and truth for the twenty-first century. **Truth is always relevant, pertinent, and important.**

Take this bit of understanding: God is the God of gods. Consider the areas of the world where great persecution of Christians is occurring. Much of it is being done in the name of a god – like Allah, or his prophet Mohammed. Some is done in the name of other heathen gods, which are really no gods at all. Let there be no pretension here: we do not have answers to all of the questions concerning WHY these persecutions are taking place. However, we pray for our suffering brethren, knowing that God is the God of the gods being served by their persecutors. All it requires is a word from God, and it will all end – just like Israel's bondage in Egypt ended.

Consider the political threats that have become common in our country. The destruction of the Trade Center, the threat of chemical warfare, and nuclear

ON ONE OCCASION, WHEN THE GOSPEL WAS BEGINNING TO SPREAD, AND SATAN'S KINGDOM WAS BEING ASSAULTED, THE LORD JESUS SAID, “I BEHELD SATAN AS LIGHTNING FALL FROM HEAVEN” (LUKE 10:18). THE LORD IS “THE GOD OF GODS.” NEBUCHADNEZZAR KNEW IT,. AND WE DO WELL TO KNOW IT ALSO.

idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled” (1 Cor 8:5-7).

Elsewhere, the Scriptures inform us that idols are related to demons, and those who sacrifice to them offer their sacrifices to demons. *“Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons”*^{NKJV} (1 Cor 10:20). Moses also confirmed this to be the case. *“They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations.”*^{NKJV} (Lev 17:7). And again, *“They*

us that we are engaged in a conflict with these forces. *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Eph 6:12). Two of these powerful personalities are mentioned in Daniel: *“the prince of Persia,”* and *“the prince of Grecia”* (Dan 10:20). Perhaps these were nothing less than the gods of these nations, to whom they offered their sacrifices and yielded their lives.

GOD IS OVER ALL

The phrases *“God of gods”* and *“Lord of lords”* (Deut 10:17; 136:3; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14; 19:14), declare that the

attack. None of these things are exempt from Divine control. Those who take the lives of the innocent and spread violence over the earth are not doing the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. They are vassals of Satan, and are serving "other gods." But God is over them. He is the "God of gods."

Wherever there is a child of God

who is suffering unjustly, or for righteousness sake, the enemy is at work. But that work is duly observed by "the God of gods," and will eventually give way to His word. **When the Lord says, "It is enough" (1 Chron 21:15), the enemy will crumble and fall!**

This is precisely why Paul could look at his own suffering and

imprisonment and say, "For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:19). He knew more fully than Nebuchadnezzar did, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is "the God of gods." **You** can know it also, and bathe your weary soul in its refreshing waters. **When this is known fully, it become usable!**

LORD OF KINGS

^{47b} **and a Lord of kings . . .** "

What a marvelous expression! Again, nearly every version says the same thing: "Lord of kings." Two exceptions are the New Living Translation and the New Jerusalem Bible – but they maintain the sense of the text: "The Lord over kings," ^{NLT} and "the Master of kings." ^{NJB} Again, by being "Lord" of the kings, it is clear that a natural enmity exists between them and the Lord. This is confirmed in the dream given to Nebuchadnezzar. In it, the kingdom of God is declared to have decimated the kingdoms of men. That was a vivid depiction of the God of heaven being "the Lord of kings." They could not stand before Him, but were crushed and entered into oblivion when His Kingdom confronted theirs.

A number of times the Lord is referred to as the "King of kings" (1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14; 19:16). The heavens rule over the earth, and God rules over all the kings of the earth. It is written, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break Their bands asunder, and cast away Their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure" (Psa 2:2-5).

The Wisdom of Solomon

The superiority of the Lord to the kings of the earth is seen in Solomon, who received wisdom from the Lord. That wisdom did not include insight into redemption, nor was it filled with an understanding of eternal matters. Yet, it

was so far advanced to the best wisdom of this world that even kings had to admit it. It is written, "And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom" (1 Kgs 4:34). Likewise, the Queen of Sheba acknowledged the superiority of Solomon's wisdom. After she had heard

Whenever the kings of the earth are knowingly in the presence of the great God of heaven, "He is awesome to the kings of the earth" (Psa 76:12). Because He is their Lord, He has even exalted His Son, His "Firstborn," "higher than the kings of the earth" (Psa 89:27). The Lord Jesus truly is "the Prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev 1:5). This word will surely

THE MORE CLEARLY CHRIST IS SEEN, THE MORE PRECISE IS OUR VISION OF GOD, AND THE MORE DIFFICULT IT IS TO FORGET HIM. THOSE WHO SEE SOMETHING OF GOD, ONLY TO QUICKLY FORGET IT, HAVE NOT BEHELD CHRIST JESUS AS HE IS – AT LEAST NOT TO ANY MEASURABLE DEGREE.

what he said, and beheld the grandeur of his kingdom, this is what occurred. "Then she said to the king: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard" ^{NKJV} (1 Kgs 10:6-7). That was nothing less than an acknowledgment that God is the "Lord of kings" – not only of Solomon, but of all others as well. As it is written, "And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart" (2 Chron 9:23). When he displayed that wisdom, God was praised.

be fulfilled, whether it appears to be likely or not: "All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth" (Psa 138:4).

NOT THE HIGHEST VIEW

This is not the highest view of our God, although it is a lofty one! In chapter three, Nebuchadnezzar will straightway forget what he has said in chapter two. I doubt not that he was fully convinced of the truth his words at the time. However, because they were on a lower level, they got away from him more quickly.

The Lord is best and more clearly seen "in the face of Christ Jesus" (2 Cor 4:6). **The more clearly Christ is seen,**

the more precise is our vision of God, and the more difficult it is to forget Him. Those who see something of God, only to quickly forget it, have not beheld Christ Jesus as He is – at least not to any measurable degree. Make no mistake about this, God is all powerful, and nothing can stand against Him. However, unless something more than that is known of Him, few Divine advantages will be realized. The greatness of our God, and the subservience of all people and things to Him, is what enables Him to work salvation in the midst of the earth (Psa 74:12). It is why He is able to

A Tragedy of the Times

One of the great tragedies of our times is that few professing Christians have seen God as heathen Nebuchadnezzar did. It is not unusual to find *Christians* unduly concerned about enemies who worship false gods, and kings who speak brashly against those who believe on Christ. It is not possible for those who suffer from such minuscule thoughts of God to have any clear understanding of salvation. Because of their fundamental ignorance of God, they are shut up to confusion and ignorance about such things as justification,

church people who are abysmally ignorant of the Living God. They do not know how He thinks, what He loves, or what He hates. In many such churches, Nebuchadnezzar would actually be a welcomed teacher, having a more lofty view of God than is common.

It may appear as though this is too harsh, but it is not. God has already revealed Jesus will come the second time *“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Th 1:8). He has addressed the church, declaring it is shameful to have members who are lacking in their knowledge of God. *“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame”* (1 Cor 15:34). Further, those who live in a state of the *“lust of concupiscence,”* or *“lustful passion”* ^{NASB} are declared to be living *“even as the Gentiles which know not God”* (1 Th 4:5).

It is difficult to conceive of a more serious condition. This is the circumstance that provokes people to be *“angry with God”* because their lives are not going as they desire. Even though religious simpletons tell such people God understands, and is able to handle their foolish anger, such souls are in serious danger. If *“whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment”* (Mat 5:22), how do you suppose it will fair for a person who dares to be angry with God *“without a cause?”* The truth of the matter is that such poor souls are suffering from an ignorance of God. What is more, they are doing so while the Son of God is enthroned in glory, desiring to show to the sons of men the glory of the Father and His great salvation. Such a state is not innocent because it is caused by unbelief. It is simply inexcusable because it requires the truth to be denied and the Spirit grieved

JUST AS THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD SHEDS LIGHT UPON ALL OF THESE THINGS, SO THE IGNORANCE OF GOD CAUSES DARKNESS TO COVER THEM ALL, SO THEY CANNOT BE CLEARLY SEEN.

keep believers from falling, cause them to stand, and prepare a table before them in the presence of their enemies (Jude 24-25; Rom 14:4; Psa 23:5).

Unless there is a dominating interest in the salvation of God, knowing He is God of gods and Lord of kings will remain encapsulated in lifeless human theology. Such knowledge, intended to have a glorious and lasting impact upon the human spirit, will, in such a case, become the subject of debate and philosophy. It will yield no benefit to the individual. One does not have to look far before confronting these conditions.

sanctification, reconciliation, the end of the world, and the power of faith. **Just as the knowledge of God sheds light upon all of these things, so the ignorance of God causes darkness to cover them all, so they cannot be clearly seen.**

We must not be content with this situation. There is a great deal of work to be done in our day. War must be declared on the ignorance of God among the professed people of God. It is one thing for an altar to be found in Athens with the inscription, *“the unknown god.”* It is quite another for Him to be unknown among those who claim identity with His Son. Yet, all across this country, there are

A REVEALER OF SECRETS

^{47c} **“ . . . and a Revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.”** Another version reads, *“a revealer of mysteries, since you have been*

able to reveal this mystery.” Keep in mind, all of the wise men and gods of Babylon failed to make known the most elemental part of Nebuchadnezzar’s

dream, or what it meant. When he first tested Daniel and his friends, they proved to be *“ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all*

his realm” (Dan 1:20). But that was nothing in comparison to what Daniel had just completed. As Daniel himself had already pointed out, the knowledge of the dream, together with its interpretation was not “revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living” (Dan 2:30). Rather, it was 100% owing to “the God in heaven that revealeth secrets” (2:28). Now Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the very thing Daniel had previously declared to him.

A REVEALER OF SECRETS

This aspect of the Divine nature is marvelous! God reveals things that cannot otherwise be known. Further “the things that are revealed” belong to the ones to whom they have been revealed (Deut 29:29). That is, Divine revelations are given in order that they may be appropriated. They are never intended to become museum pieces or sources of fleshly pride.

How Did the King Know?

“ . . . seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.” The evidence of God’s ability to reveal secrets was the word delivered by Daniel. Here is a most excellent example of letting our light shine before men. Did not Jesus exhort us, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat 5:16). In this case, the good work was Daniel speaking forth what God had made known to him. What follows is Nebuchadnezzar glorifying the Father who is in heaven.

From this we see that “good works” are defined by Divine objective, not human assessment. **Men will only glorify God for what they see Him doing through His people.**

Discretionary

The revelations of God are discretionary. They do not come automatically, and they are not granted to everyone. That is precisely why Nebuchadnezzar confessed what he did. He knew Daniel alone received the revelation. Nebuchadnezzar could not obtain it on his own. In fact, even Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not receive the revelation. It was given to Daniel, and to Daniel alone.

It was said of Samuel when he was

yet young, “Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him” (1 Sam 3:7).

- ▣ Later, “the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD” (1 Sam 3:21).
- ▣ God revealed to David that He was going to make a house for David (2 Sam 7:27).
- ▣ Isaiah equated believing with the arm of the Lord being “revealed” (Isa 53:1).
- ▣ Before Simeon, a just and devout

the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the “secret” was the very thing God revealed. To put it another way, **if God had not revealed it, the matter would have forever remained a secret.**

A Known Aspect of God

Throughout history, those who have walked with God have known this aspect of His character: **He makes things known!** This is more than a unit of information – something to be handily added to a theological system. Nebuchadnezzar concluded God was a Revealer because of what He made known to Daniel. There is no record, however, of him relying upon this reality, or imploring the Lord to make things known to him. Notice how what he did with this morsel

THE REVELATIONS OF GOD ARE DISCRETIONARY. THEY DO NOT COME AUTOMATICALLY, AND THEY ARE NOT GRANTED TO EVERYONE. THAT IS PRECISELY WHY NEBUCHADNEZZAR CONFESSED WHAT HE DID. HE KNEW DANIEL ALONE RECEIVED THE REVELATION. NEBUCHADNEZZAR COULD NOT OBTAIN IT ON HIS OWN.

man, blessed the babe Jesus “it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ” (Luke 2:26).

- ▣ Jesus said God revealed precious things to “babes,” but hid them from the “wise and the prudent” (Matt 11:25).
- ▣ When Peter confessed Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Jesus told him, “flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Mat 16:17).
- ▣ Concerning the things God has prepared for those who love Him, “God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor 2:10).

In all of these matters, as well as

of knowledge compares with the righteousness of the ages.

- ▣ **MOSES.** Knowing the nature of the Lord, Moses pled, “Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, **show me** now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people” (Exo 33:13). Again, encouraged by what he knew of the Lord, Moses asked, “I beseech thee, **show me** thy glory” (Exo 33:18).
- ▣ **DAVID.** Being acquainted with the Lord, David asked much the same thing as Moses. “**Show me** thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day” (Psa 25:4-5).
- ▣ **THE SONS OF KORAH.** Noted for their singing, and also being acquainted with the Lord, these sons

prayed, ***“Show us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation”*** (Psa 85:7).

- **JEREMIAH.** This weeping prophet, charged with the responsibility of heralding the Babylonian captivity, also challenged the people to seek for the Lord to make things known to them. *“And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us: That the LORD thy God **may show us** the way wherein we may walk, and the thing*

(Eph 1:17-18). Again, he made known his prayers for the Colossians. *“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be **filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding**”* (Col 1:9).

Here is another area where the New Covenant offers benefits never before realized. With sin removed, the redeemed have received a new heart and spirit – both of which are capable of taking hold of the hidden things of God. We know that God has *“prepared”* remarkable and glorious things for those who *“love Him”* (1 Cor 2:9). Now, through the Holy Spirit,

Nebuchadnezzar what He was doing in the earth, you can imagine what He will reveal to those who love Him, and are the called according to His purpose!

Nebuchadnezzar only had a word!

I want to stress this once again. Nebuchadnezzar only had a word. **Daniel offered no visible proof that what he said was the truth – he simply declared a word.** However, the power of Almighty God accompanied that word. There was power present to persuade Nebuchadnezzar that what Daniel said was the truth. There was power to unveil to the heathen king the greatness of the one God with whom he was not acquainted. That Divine power subdued any outbreak of foolishness. It mellowed the king so he would not break forth in anger as he did with the wise men, astrologers, and magicians.

It is staggering to ponder what great power accompanies the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and how great things can be made known to those who hear it in faith. It caused some who murdered the Son of God to cry out, *“What shall we do?”* (Acts 2:37). It moved an Ethiopian eunuch to ask, *“See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”* (Acts 8:36). It enabled the Thessalonians to turn to God from idols, to serve Him, and to wait for His Son from heaven (1 Thess 1:9-10).

If good results could come from telling of the demise of worldly kingdoms, what will result from the announcement of the “glorious Gospel of the blessed God?” (1 Tim 1:11). As we devote ourselves to the proclamation of the good news, we will provide opportunity for men to glorify God. The Spirit and power of God accompany that glorious message. We must learn to reckon on that fact.

THERE IS NO REASON WHY BELIEVERS SHOULD REMAIN IN A FUNDAMENTALLY IGNORANT STATE ABOUT THESE THINGS. GOD HAS PREPARED THINGS FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM, AND HE DESIRES TO MAKE THEM KNOWN.

that we may do” (Jer 42:3).

- **PAUL.** In his faithful ministry to the body of Christ, Paul made known he was praying the Lord would reveal things to His people. *“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you **the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;** that ye may know . . .”*

He is making those things known to the ones for whom they are prepared – the ones who *“love Him.”* **There is no reason why believers should remain in a fundamentally ignorant state about these things.**

God has prepared things for those who love Him, and He desires to make them known. His great salvation has made full provision for His children to know His will, and have a clearer vision of Himself. If God made known to

DANIEL IS MADE A GREAT MAN

“⁴⁸ Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.” Not only does Nebuchadnezzar extol the Lord who gave

the word, he also recognizes the man of God through whom the word came. The feet of those who bring good news are ever *“beautiful,”* and precious to those who hear the message (Rom 10:15). God never gives a word through a person without that person being duly recognized. While

we are not to vaunt men, we are to give honor to whom honor is due.

It has always been the Lord’s manner to exalt those who have received His word and faithfully discharged what they were commanded. Who can forget

men like Noah whose only claim to fame was that he obeyed God, building an ark to the saving of his house (Heb 11:7). Abraham is well known among those who believe God, even though his most noble achievement was that he *“believed God”* (Rom 4:3). Moses was lauded because he faithfully gave the Law to the people, and led them through the great and terrible wilderness (John 1:17; Isa 63:12).

Now we will see Daniel promoted. On the surface this promotion came from Nebuchadnezzar. However, we must ever remember, *“For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another”* (Psa 75:6-7). In our text, the great God of heaven has put down the Babylonian wise men, and will now set up Daniel the faithful one.

DANIEL MADE A GREAT MAN

“Then the king made Daniel a great man . . .” Other versions read, *“the king promoted Daniel,”* ^{NKJV} *“the king placed Daniel in a high position,”* ^{NIV} and *“the king gave Daniel high honors.”* ^{RSV}

In a moment of time, Daniel’s status was dramatically changed. From a relatively unknown Hebrew counselor, he was vaulted to kingdom prominence. He gave what the Lord had given to him, and, in the words of Jesus, it was given back to him *“good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again”* (Luke 6:38).

A *“great man”* is one who is so regarded. That is, such honors were bestowed upon Daniel that he became prominent and well known. Ultimately, this favor came from God, although it was conferred by Nebuchadnezzar. In doing this, the king was carrying out what he had promised, thereby showing he was a man of his word: *“But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof”* (Dan 2:6). Daniel was advanced to a post of great dignity. He had honored God, and now God was honoring him. Through a prophet the Lord said, *“them that honor Me I will*

honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Sam 2:30).

The Attitude of the King

The truth of God has had a humbling effect upon Nebuchadnezzar. It appears he has hardly any regard for himself, but focuses his attention upon the exaltation of Daniel. When men believe the truth of God it does have a humbling effect upon them. They thus obtain a high regard for those who have delivered the truth to them.

There are several men in Scripture who were particularly exalted because of their association with the Living God. The circumstances are remarkable.

▣ **ABRAHAM.** From a mere son of

▣ **DANIEL.** From captive to premier (Dan 2:47).

▣ **SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNIGO.** From unknown captives to key positions in the province of Babylon (Dan 3:30).

If there is any doubt about the greatness of God, ponder the unlikely promotion of these men! In every case, their whole condition changed within a brief period of time. And who can forget Peter, Andrew, James, and John, who were moved from fisherman to Apostles in a single day (Matt 4:18-22). And, who can forget Levi (also called Matthew, Matt 9:9), who moved from being a tax collector to an Apostle with the utterance of two words: *“Follow me”* (Mark 2:14).

FAITHFULNESS ALWAYS BRINGS DIVINE BENEFITS, AND NO INDIVIDUAL IS CAPABLE OF IMAGINING HOW SIGNIFICANT THEY CAN BE.

Terah to the father of a great nation, being blessed by God and obtaining a great name (Gen 12:2-3).

▣ **JOSEPH.** From a slave in prison to the prince of Egypt (Gen 41).

▣ **MOSES.** From an exile to the one who gave the Law of God (Ex 3:7-10).

▣ **AARON.** From a slave to the high priest of God (Ex 28).

▣ **SAUL.** From obscurity to king (1 Sam 9-10).

▣ **DAVID.** From the sheepcotes to the throne (Ex 3:10-22; 2 Sam 7:8).

▣ **JEROBOAM.** From a slave to the throne (1 Kgs 11:26-35).

▣ **ELISHA.** From plowing a field to a mighty prophet of God (1 Kgs 19:19-20).

▣ **BAASHA.** From out of the dust to a prince over the people (1 Kgs 16:1-2).

Let every soul learn from the prophet Daniel that their labor is not vain in the Lord! As it is written, *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”* (1 Cor 15:58). **Faithfulness always brings Divine benefits, and no individual is capable of imagining how significant they can be.**

MANY GIFTS

“ . . . and gave him many great gifts . . .” Nebuchadnezzar had not only promised honor for the one who told him his dream and the interpretation of it, but gifts as well: *“ye shall receive gifts and rewards”* (Dan 2:6). Now the king fulfills his promise, giving him *“many great gifts.”* The NIV reads, *“the king . . . lavished many gifts upon him.”*

Some years later, when Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall for Belshazzar, he was also offered gifts. That time Daniel did not receive them. Rather,

his response was, “*Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation*” (Dan 5:17). Of course there was a small difference in the cases. Belshazzar sought to **obtain** the interpretation through gifts, while

RULING THE WHOLE PROVINCE

“... and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon...” This is a most remarkable promotion – especially when you consider the greatness of Babylon. The kingdom of the Chaldeans was divided into provinces, and Babylon was the chief one of them. It was the

This account should generate hope in the hearts of all believers. **Let them not be discouraged concerning their circumstances.** If they are something less than desirable, they can change just as surely as those of Daniel changed.

RULER OF THE GOVERNORS AND WISE MEN

“... and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.” An additional promotion involved Daniel being “*chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon*”^{NKJV} (Dan 2:48). Among other things, this confirms the wise men had not been eliminated from the empire. The phrase “*chief of the governors*,” suggests there was some form of grouping of Babylon’s wise men and counselors – something like our senate and house of representatives.

THIS ACCOUNT SHOULD GENERATE HOPE IN THE HEARTS OF ALL BELIEVERS. LET THEM NOT BE DISCOURAGED CONCERNING THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES. IF THEY ARE SOMETHING LESS THAN DESIRABLE, THEY CAN CHANGE JUST AS SURELY AS THOSE OF DANIEL CHANGED.

Nebuchadnezzar **responded** to the interpretation with gifts. If Daniel had provided the meaning of the handwriting on the wall **after** receiving gifts, he could have been viewed like Balaam, who prophesied for wages (2 Pet 2:15). No such motive can be ascribed to Daniel in our text. He did not speak for a reward, but because he was moved by the God of heaven to do so.

I gather the gifts included things like royal clothing, gold, silver, precious stones, and perhaps real estate. Daniel received the gifts, but was never known for being a covetous or grasping man. Like Abraham, Job, and Joseph, he knew how to handle great riches (Gen 13:2; Job 1:3; Gen 41:41-43).

heart of the empire, and the seat of government – something like Washington DC is to the United States.

You can see the confidence that Nebuchadnezzar had in Daniel. He saw no threat of usurpation in him. He did not regard him to be a potential leader of an insurrection among the local captive Jews. Daniel was, in a very real sense, “*approved of men*” (Rom 14:18). He had proved himself faithful to the Lord, and thus even his enemies were made to be a peace with him (Prov 16:7). You must not forget that Nebuchadnezzar is the king who brought Daniel as a captive into Babylon (1:1-6). Yet, at the time of our text, one could scarcely imagine that such a thing had taken place.

Here we see a dramatic turn of events. In the beginning, Daniel and his comrades were taught “*the language and literature of the Chaldeans*” (1:4). Now, the wise men of the whole empire have a Jewish prophet over them – one who has proved faithful to the Lord in every way. He refused to defile himself with the king’s food. He faithfully declared the word of the Lord to the king, even though it spoke no blessing upon the king.

We may very well surmise Daniel will do not less in his new position. There will now be a certain moral influence present in Babylon. Prophetic words will be spoken in high places, and a sense of the greatness of the God of heaven will be had. And all of this happened in a period of time, being accomplished through a heathen king.

A REQUEST FOR HIS COMPANIONS

“⁴⁹ ***Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.***” How will Daniel respond to all of this? Before this, he was a slave in training. Now he is a key political official. Before this, he was a child of the state, with little or no possessions of his own.

Now he is a man of substance, having received many impressive gifts. What will be the reply of the man of God?

THE EXTREMES OF LIFE

Many souls cannot handle a sudden influx of possessions and power. Countless immature people have plummeted to the bottom of the economic and social ladder when they came into

wealth, prosperity, and influence. They simply could not handle it. The wisdom of Solomon regarding these things is noteworthy. “*Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain*” (Prov 30:8-9). He knew there was

no virtue or advantage at the extremities of life in this world – “poverty” and “riches.” There is no more advantage to being poor than there is to being rich, notwithstanding the views of simple people. Solomon declared why he thought this way, and he was employing the wisdom God gave to him. Being “poor,” he reasoned, would tempt him to “steal, and take the name of my God in vain.” Being “rich,” he concluded, would tempt him to be “full,” denying the Lord and saying, “Who is the LORD?” In such a case, he might have thought he alone was responsible for his affluent state.

ADAPTING THROUGH FAITH

Of course, in Christ Jesus people can adapt to both extremes – poverty and riches. They need not be overcome by either – particularly if they view them as classrooms in which they are taught by God. Thus Paul confessed, “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil 4:11-13).

Daniel had experienced both extremes – poverty and riches – and he did so admirably. Now we will see that, like love, he does not seek his own (1 Cor 13:5). His faith will equip him to handle authority to the glory of God.

DANIEL REQUESTED THE KING

“Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon.” Surely this is bold request, and it is asked at the threshold of Daniel’s new position! Daniel himself has been made the “ruler over the whole province of Babylon.” Now, as his first official act,

he requests that the other three children of Judah be “administrators over the province of Babylon.” These would be like his lieutenants, carrying out his orders for the central area and hub of the empire.

Daniel did not forget his friends,

of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Dan 3:12). Together with Daniel, these men had already proved themselves “ten

NOW, AS HIS FIRST OFFICIAL ACT, HE REQUESTS THAT THE OTHER THREE CHILDREN OF JUDAH BE “ADMINISTRATORS OVER THE PROVINCE OF BABYLON.” THESE WOULD BE LIKE HIS LIEUTENANTS, CARRYING OUT HIS ORDERS FOR THE CENTRAL AREA AND HUB OF THE EMPIRE.

as those who think only of themselves are wont to do. These three young men had labored with him in prayer for the revelation of the king’s matter. Now, they will share in the spoils of victory. They were like those of David’s day who “abode by the stuff,” or “stayed with the baggage” (1 Sam 25:13). When the spoils of war were distributed, David did not forget those men. His judgment was placed into a permanent statute in the land. “But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike. So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day” (1 Sam 30:24-25). Thus, in the spirit of king David, Daniel shares the spoils with his faithful companions.

Although the text does not say so here, we learn later that Nebuchadnezzar did place Daniel’s friends over the affairs of Babylon. The next chapter will draw that to our attention, when these three men refuse to bow before a golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar. Their critics told the king, “There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs

times wiser” than the most astute wise men in Babylon. The king, therefore, will only be the better for putting them in responsible positions.

I cannot help but note the sharp conflict of these appointments with the manner of our Western world, including its churches. Here, the most powerful ruler in the world made appointments based upon two things: performance and recommendation. The same thing occurred with Joseph in Egypt. The thought has often occurred to me that none of the four Nebuchadnezzar appointed over his affairs would be accepted in the average church or Christian institution. Perhaps that is one of the reasons we are suffering from such a wave of spiritual mediocrity.

Should you ever have the opportunity to be placed in a higher position, conduct yourself in such a manner that you will not be ashamed to stand before Joseph, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the great and notable day of the Lord! You will then be a source of blessing like Daniel.

CONCLUSION

The text before us has been a notable one. In it we have seen the power of a faithful witness. Faith removes the fear of man, which “bringeth a snare”

(Prov 29:25). It also enables believers to be wise and considerate in their responses. Social blunders are largely owing to a lack of faith and insight, both

of which are available in abundance to the child of God (2 Thess 1:3; James 1:5).

Behold how things were worked

together for the good of Daniel. He has a message that declares the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar will be replaced by one that is inferior. According to the flesh, that would be a message you would want to keep quiet – particularly if it was not going to take place for a while. However, when it is delivered precisely as the Lord had given it, the king actually rewards Daniel with a place of honor, great gifts, political power, and an opportunity to have his friends elevated also. That is how the Lord works, causing things to fall out for the advantage of His people.

Thus God can cause a harsh

decree to fail. He can melt the heart of an angry king. He can cause a king to see the greatness of God, confess it, and decree that His prophet be exalted.

Add to this that God's word will not return to Him void. It will accomplish what it has been sent to do, even though spoken by a young and untenured man to a seasoned global monarch (Isa 55:11).

Those who are tempted to modify the Word of the Lord, making it palatable for the world, do well to sit at the feet of Daniel. No good purpose would have been served by Daniel reducing the power of

the message he had been given – toning it down so it would not be abrasive. In fact, that would have been a transgression of the greatest magnitude. If God says the kingdoms of this world will be crushed into oblivion by His own Kingdom, what purpose would be served by modifying the message, or possibly omitting some of its details? Such a practice is reprehensible.

If you are a worker for the Lord, be a faithful one. Speak the message as it is, for *"it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful"* (1 Cor 4:2). You will find that God is faithful, giving you the very best when you are faithful.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 5/31/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, covering verses 46-49 of the second chapter. The lesson is titled, **"DANIEL'S SECOND TEST BY THE KING'S DECREE."** The second test of Daniel's faith is even more extensive than the first one. Yet, his faith will prove superior to the most unusual trial that is focused upon him. 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.

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