



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 15

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, FILLED WITH PRIDE, THEN HUMBLED

^{10:29} At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. ³⁰ The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? ³¹ While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. ³² And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. ³³ The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. ³⁴ And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: ³⁵ And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? ³⁶ At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. ³⁷ Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase. ^{KJV} (Daniel 4:29-37)

INTRODUCTION

Our text deals with one of the singular temporal judgments of God against a man. In the realm of flesh and blood, it has no equal. Never before or

after was a mortal so significantly altered in appearance and mind as king Nebuchadnezzar. His judgment was to individuals what the flood was to the all of

the world's history – unparalleled.

God has dealt with certain individuals in most unique and arresting

God Is Glorified by One of the Singular Judgments of an Individual In All of History, by Given O. Blakely

OUTLINE

- ▶ AT THE END OF TWELVE MONTHS (4:29-30)
- ▶ IMMEDIATELY, A VOICE FROM HEAVEN (4:31)
- ▶ THEY SHALL DRIVE THEE FROM MEN (4:32)
- ▶ THE SAME HOUR (4:33)
- ▶ AT THE END OF THE DAYS (4:34)
- ▶ THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH FROM HEAVEN'S VIEW (4:35)
- ▶ THE RETURN OF THE KING'S REASON (4:36)
- ▶ HONORING THE LORD (4:37)

ways, setting them apart from all others. **This has been done for our learning, that we might become more familiar with His ways.** A few examples will suffice to bring this home to our conscience. It is imperative that we see how eager God is to show Himself to us.

- ▶ **An entire world.** In the days of Noah, God revealed how extensive His judgment can be. The entire world, saving for eight souls, was destroyed by water (Gen 7:21).
- ▶ **Entire nations.** The nation of the Amalekites provides an example of Divine judgment against an entire nation, blotting out even its remembrance from under the sun (Deut 25:19).
- ▶ **Entire Cities.** In Sodom and Gomorrah the Lord made known that His judgment can fall upon entire cities, even to the point of utterly removing them from the face of the earth (Deut 29:23).
- ▶ **Adam.** An entire race was judged because of his single act of disobedience (Rom 5:12-19).
- ▶ **Cain.** A punishment of such magnitude was given to him because of his murder of Cain, that he thought it impossible to bear (Gen

4:13-14).

- ▶ **Job.** Here was a single example of how much a person can suffer, and yet maintain his integrity (Job 1:22; 2:3).
- ▶ **Abraham.** One person was so blessed as to impact the entire world (Gen 12:1-3).
- ▶ **Joseph.** In a single individual, adversity was shown to be inferior to blessing (Gen 50:20).
- ▶ **Pharaoh.** Unparalleled judgments were rendered against this man and his nation in order to make God's power known (Ex 9:16).
- ▶ **David.** Although he lived in inferior times, this man was made superior by his closeness to and appetite for the Living God (1 Sam 13:14).
- ▶ **Solomon.** In this man God revealed how much wisdom can be given to a single individual, independent of the ordinary earning process (1 Kgs 4:29).
- ▶ **Nebuchadnezzar.** Here we see how awful the judgment of God can be, and how long it can be endured (Dan 4).
- ▶ **Paul the Apostle.** Here was a single man, so blessed with spiritual understanding, that he affected an entire world (Acts 26:17-18).

God Tries the Hearts of Men

Now, in king Nebuchadnezzar, we behold the remarkable extent to which Divine judgment can be poured out on a single individual – **and yet a recovery still be experienced.** The manner in which God dealt with this man stands

the whole earth. As it is written, *“The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, His eyelids try, **the children of men**”* (Psa 11:4). Because He is *“the Lord of all the earth”* (Zech 6:5), no person is exempt from God's scrutiny, judgment, and correction.

There is a notion among men that God does not concern himself with the affairs of the ungodly, or those who are not in covenant with Him. Thus some view the Law as having to do only with Israel – as though God would allow other men to transgress that Law with impunity. Nothing could be further from the truth! God extended mercy to Cornelius because he walked in accord with His Law (Acts 10:1-4). Now He will judge Nebuchadnezzar for walking contrary to it, by not loving and honoring the God of heaven.

We Can Learn From Others

There is no need for every individual to have to “learn the hard way.” All of these things are written for our learning (Rom 15:4). In fact, the Spirit declares things *“happened”* to Israel *“as examples, and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come”*^{NIV} (1 Cor 10:11).

PROFITING FROM THE WORD

Our faith can take hold of these accounts and gain all of the benefits realized by the very people who experienced them. **In some cases, what happened to others is more profitable for us than it was for them.** The saints can personally profit from the experiences of their predecessors.

View Scripture Properly

For this reason, the people of God

THE INVOLVEMENT OF GOD WITH MEN, WHETHER FOR BLESSING OR CURSING, IS ALWAYS DELIBERATE, AND WITH A MIND TO MAKE HIS NATURE AND WILL KNOWN.

alone in the annals of history – absolutely unique. This is intended to confirm to our hearts that the eyes of the Lord are upon

must exercise themselves to avoid treating Scriptural accounts as mere historical records or stories. **The involvement of**

God with men, whether for blessing or cursing, is always deliberate, and with a mind to make His nature and will known. Every Scriptural account of Divine interposition in the affairs of men reveals the character of God, as well as that of men. The seeds of understanding are sown in them all. Each record is like a container in which indispensable lessons can be learned, insights received, and direction experienced.

At their heart, the Scriptures are an exposition of God Himself. They delineate His Person and His will, and that for a reason. If God is not seen in Scripture, nothing is seen at all. In all of these things, the Scriptures are making us *“wise unto salvation”* (2 Tim 3:15). This marvelous wisdom is not only realized by the directives of Scripture, and the duties of men. It is also seen in God’s response to the various attitudes of His creation.

The text before us shows the Divine manner toward the proud, and those who exalt themselves. It reveals principles that apply to the lowly beggar as well as the impressive king. Whether it is Korah, Nebuchadnezzar, or Herod, the proud will not go unpunished. No person is exempt from Divine scrutiny. There is no such thing as a person God does not evaluate and judge. His eyes are always upon the sons of men.

AT THE END OF TWELVE MONTHS

“ 4:29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. ³⁰ The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might

Those who handle the Word of God must take due note of this Divine manner. With care those who speak in behalf of the Lord must avoid meaningless and profitless details that only stir up godless curiosity. **The bane of raw**

More specifically, the historical peaks of which I speak are occasions in which the Lord is working more prominently, shaping history for His glory in a distinct way. They are points of Divine focus, when He is carrying out His purpose.



While the Lord is *“Lord over all,”* managing the affairs of this world for His own glory, **there are matters in which He is particularly active.** There are individuals with whom He especially works, and in whom He reveals more of Himself. Nebuchadnezzar is such a person.

AT THE END OF TWELVE MONTHS

“At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.” This event takes place twelve months after Daniel interpreted his dream, announcing that Divine judgment was going to fall upon him. It will at once become evident that he has all but forgotten what was so forcefully declared to him twelve months earlier. Remember how precisely God had spoken to him through Daniel. A remarkable number of details were given to him.

of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?”

As is the manner of the Spirit, He moves along as though leaping from one mountain peak to another – from one Divine work to another. He never is bogged down with meaningless details. The particulars of what occurred between the king’s global proclamation and the eruption of his pride are incidental. They are not profitable for edification, and would only tend to distract us from the real benefit.

scholasticism is that it tends to appeal to human curiosity, while starving the soul and ignoring faith.

It is not unusual to see academicians who are expert in trivia, but unlearned in matters of eternal consequence. This condition is the result of not being able to properly navigate in the truth of God. Such poor souls cannot leap from mountain to mountain, gaining the benefit of Divine perspective. They do not have *“hinds feet”* (2 Sam 22:34), and thus are actually spiritually crippled.

- ▣ He had grown and become strong (4:22a).
- ▣ His greatness grew, reaching into heaven, and his dominion to the end of the earth (4:22b).
- ▣ He would be driven from men (4:25a).
- ▣ His dwelling would be with the beasts of the field (4:25b).
- ▣ He would eat grass as the oxen

(4:25c).

- ▣ He would be wet with the dew of heaven (4:25d).
- ▣ He would be in this state for seven long years (4:25e).
- ▣ He would come to know the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, giving it to whomever He wills (4:25f).
- ▣ After he knew the heavens do rule, His kingdom would be restored to him (4:26).
- ▣ He was counseled to renounce his sins and do what is right, in hope the judgment would be delayed (4:27).

The message was certainly arresting! It should have provoked firm resolve and a change of life. But now, twelve short months later, the authoritative word he heard was all but forgotten.

The Manner of the Flesh

As I have indicated before, it is the manner of the flesh to forget the Word of the Lord. It cannot learn the truth of God, for such things are foolishness to the flesh. As it is written, *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Cor 2:14).

It simply is not possible to train the flesh so it retains the Word of the Lord. It can neither receive nor profit from the revelation of God. This is why Jesus said *“the flesh profiteth nothing”* (John 6:63). **It contributes nothing to matters of eternal consequence.**

This is why Israel forsook the Lord, provoking Him to abhor His own inheritance (Psa 106:40). It is why Solomon departed from God in his latter years, angering the Lord because He had appeared to him *“twice”* (1 Kgs 11:9). It is why the disciples were spiritually obtuse prior to the exaltation of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Matt 14:31; 21:20; John 20:9; Mk 9:32).

“The flesh profiteth nothing.”

It cannot learn and retain the things of God. The flesh is a bag filled with holes

that cannot store up the things of God, or realize lasting benefits from His revelations. It cannot be trained to consistently do what is right, nor can it be changed for the good. Blessed is the person who learns this, and ceases to rely upon the flesh. Remember, *“The flesh profiteth nothing”* (John 6:63).

Whatever one may think about the fallen condition of man, his depravity, etc.

“clean escape.” Yet, these things passed through him leaving no Divine residue upon his soul. The carnal mind is truly *“enmity against God”* (Rom 8:7). That *“enmity”* is made known in forgetfulness as well as aggressiveness against the Lord’s people.

THIS GREAT BABYLON

“Is not this great Babylon . . .” As

This description is copied from an article on Babylon in
Kitto’s *“Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature,”* vol. I. pp. 270,271

“The new palace built by Nebuchadnezzar was prodigious in size and superb in embellishments. Its outer wall embraced six miles; within that circumference were two other embattled walls, besides a great tower. Three brazen gates led into the grand area, and every gate of consequence throughout the city was of brass. The palace was splendidly decorated with statues of men and animals, with vessels of gold and silver, and furnished with luxuries of all kinds brought thither from conquests in Egypt, Palestine, and Tyre. Its greatest boast were the hanging gardens, which acquired, even from Grecian writers, the appellation of one of the wonders of the world. They are attributed to the gallantry of Nebuchadnezzar, who constructed them in compliance with a wish of his queen Amytis to possess elevated groves, such as she had enjoyed on the hills around her native Ecbatana. Babylon was all flat, and to accomplish so extravagant a desire, an artificial mountain was reared, four hundred feet on each side, while terraces, one above another, rose to a height that overtopped the walls of the city, that is, above three hundred feet in elevation. The ascent from terrace to terrace was made by corresponding flights of steps, while the terraces themselves were reared to their various stages on ranges of regular piers, which, forming a kind of vaulting, rose in succession one over the other to the required height of each terrace, the whole being bound together by a wall twenty-two feet in thickness. The level of each terrace or garden was then formed in the following manner: the tops of the piers were first laid over with flat stones, sixteen feet in length, and four in width; on these stones were spread beds of matting, then a thick layer of bitumen, after which came two courses of bricks, which were covered with sheets of solid lead. The earth was heaped on this platform, and in order to admit the roots of large trees, prodigious hollow piers were built and filled with mold. From the Euphrates, which flowed close to the foundation, water was drawn up by machinery. The whole, says Q. Curtius (v. 5), had, to those who saw it from a distance, the appearance of woods overhanging mountains. The remains of this palace are found in the vast mound or hill called by the natives “Kasr.” It is of irregular form, eight hundred yards in length, and six hundred yards in breadth. Its appearance is constantly undergoing change from the continual digging which takes place in its inexhaustible quarries for brick of the strongest and finest material. Hence, the mass is furrowed into deep ravines, crossing and recrossing each other in every direction.”

– apart from a new birth, it is not possible to see or enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5). Men haggle about HOW a person is born again. Too often, they have not been convinced of **the necessity of the new birth**. Once that conviction comes, they will more readily receive what the Lord has clearly made known. There is no question that the new birth is realized in an ordained procedure. **However, in Scripture, the procedure is not the emphasis, but the necessity of the new birth.**

The conduct of Nebuchadnezzar in our text confirms all of this to be true. He had witnessed the working of the Lord through Daniel. Twice God had revealed things to him that concerned his own person and kingdom. The first time, the destiny of all world kingdoms was even made known to him. He personally saw the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and attested to their

the king walked on the top of his magnificent palace, the dazzling city of Babylon stretched out before his eyes. Its hanging gardens were one of the wonders of the world. Splendor and unparalleled grandeur were found in every facet of what he saw.

Historical Account

History tells us Nebuchadnezzar regarded this city as the apple of his eye, and that the palace was its most glorious ornament. It was the center of the whole country, covered a vast space, and was visible far and wide. It was built of brick and bitumen (an asphalt of ancient times used as a cement and mortar). It was enriched with cedar and iron, and decorated with countless inscriptions and paintings. The tower contained the treasures of Nebuchadnezzar’s royalty, with silver, gold, metals, gems, and immense treasures of rare value. Its walls were three hundred and eighty feet high,

and eighty-five feet thick. Each side of the quadrilateral they enclosed was fifteen miles in length. The mighty Euphrates flowed through the midst of the city, which is sad to have covered a space of two hundred square miles. On its farther bank, terrace upon terrace was seen up to its central altar, where the huge Temple of Bel with all of its dependent temples and palaces resided. The vast circuit of the walls enclosed not only houses, but contained interspaces of gardens, palm-groves, orchards, and corn-land sufficient to sustain the entire population. Here and there were temples to Nebo, Sin the moon god, Mylitta, Nana, Samas, and other Babylonian deities. There were also numerous aqueducts, or conduits for

house of the kingdom” as “*a royal dwelling*,”^{NKJV} “*a royal residence*,”^{NASB} and “*a royal capital*.”^{NRSV}

Previously, when Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed of the great multi-metalled statue, Daniel told him, “*Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory*” (Dan 2:37). Twelve months earlier Daniel said the king would be punished until he knew “*that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will*” (Dan 4:25). But now, he has forgotten those solemn words, and begins to boast as though his own hand had wrought all of these things.

circumstance! One year earlier, every detail that will now occur was spelled out to Nebuchadnezzar. **He was without excuse!** Sufficient warning had been given to the king to make some correction in his ways. Daniel had even counseled him to separate himself from sin and do what was right. He had apparently ignored the warning.

ALL MEN ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE

Herein is a marvelous consideration. **Although “the flesh profiteth nothing,” and cannot retain the things of God, men are responsible to do so.** For some, this appears unfair, but it is not. It is possible for men with no strength of themselves to cry out as David did, “*Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression*” (Psa 19:13).

A Principle to be Seen

There is a vital principle to be seen in all of this. **At the every moment men are apprised of the truth of God, they should set themselves to conform to it, calling upon the name of the Lord.** Such responses are what especially endeared men like Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel and David to the Lord. They were men who instantly responded to the God of heaven. **Those who delay their response to God, thrusting the Word of the Lord from themselves, immediately begin to walk under His wrath, which hovers over them.**

There are many disadvantages in the current generation. **However, none of them are as serious as the notion that God gives men a lot of time to think about their relationship to Himself.** I find this imagination being perpetrated in nearly the whole manner of contemporary Christianity. It is in the preaching and the music, the church programs, and religious education. There is a remarkable lack of a sense of urgency and immediacy. A awareness of the importance of responding in faith to God is rarely seen. These are, indeed, “*perilous times*.”

All men must draw near to this text, and learn intently of the ways of the God to whom they owe everything.

FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF MEN, THERE IS NOT A SINGLE WORLDLY HISTORIAN WHO WOULD NOT HAVE CONCURRED THAT THE KING’S JUDGMENT WAS RIGHT. ANY NEWSPAPER REPORTER WOULD HAVE AGREED. ANY EARTHLY POLITICIAN WOULD HAVE SAID “AMEN” – FOR THAT IS THE WAY IT APPEARED.

water, forts, and palaces. The walls themselves contained one hundred brazen gates.
DEAN F.W. FARRAR, Expositor’s Bible

From the standpoint of appearance, the grandeur of Babylon is beyond all controversy impressive. Although this city was originally built by Semiramis, Nebuchadnezzar had so enhanced and adorned it that its total appearance had been altered. Now the king peruses the large and ornate city and is filled with pride. This is a city that would be an unique and impressive today as it was in Nebuchadnezzar’s time.

BUILT BY MY POWER AND FOR MY HONOR

“ . . . that I have built for the house of the kingdom by **the might of my power**, and for **the honor of my majesty**.” Other versions refer to “the

From the viewpoint of men, there is not a single worldly historian who would not have concurred that the king’s judgment was right. Any newspaper reporter would have agreed. Any earthly politician would have said “Amen” – for that is the way it appeared. But the appearance led both Nebuchadnezzar and all flesh to the wrong conclusion. The “invisible” God was behind it all. His omnipotent hand may not have been apparent, but men would be held in strict account for not recognizing it. **If God had not given the king his kingdom and all of its glory, he could not have planted a single shrub that would have flourished.** All of his accomplishments sprang from God’s beneficent hand.

NO ORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCE

But this is no ordinary

IMMEDIATELY, A VOICE FROM HEAVEN

“³¹ While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.”

Does the Lord really take note of what men say? Gentile men? Those who are not in covenant with Him? Kings of heathen nations? The text suggests that Nebuchadnezzar was alone when the notion of his own greatness was expressed by him. However, his words were not hidden from God. **There is a sense in which all of our words are public.** We must not allow ourselves to slip into spiritual slumber so that this truth eludes us! Solomon once said of those who spoke against the king, *“Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter”* (Eccl 10:20). **How much more is this true of those who rob God of His glory by taking credit for what he has done!**

You may recall that Jesus spoke of a person who was blessed with an abundance. Instead of giving God glory, he determined to build more warehouses, making provisions to consume all of the benefits himself: *“And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry”* (Luke 12:19). Jesus does not say the man was a Jew or a Gentile, in covenant with God or not. That was not even the point. This man had received blessing from God, but treated it as though he was the source and chief beneficiary of it all. No sooner had this thought arisen in his heart, than God responded. *“But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”* (Luke 12:20).

WHILE IT WAS IN HIS MOUTH

“While the word was in the king’s mouth . . .” Other versions read *“While these words were still on the king’s lips.”* ^{NAB/NIV} The idea is, *“While he was still speaking these words.”* ^{NLT} **The king had not even finished speaking when his words evoked a response from**

heaven! To put it another way, words from heaven drowned out and terminated the words of the king. **Heavenly interruptions bring the expressions of the flesh to a grinding halt.** The Sovereign God of heaven will not sing a duet with the kings of the earth. He will rather cause their arrogant words to cease by thundering at them from heaven.

THERE FELL A VOICE

“ . . . there fell a voice from heaven . . .” So far as the record is concerned, God had never before spoken directly to Nebuchadnezzar. He had sent dreams and thoughts into his head while he was upon his bed. But the messages themselves were delivered to the king by Daniel – at least up to this point. Now God speaks

kingdom is departed from thee.”

This Is For You!

Other versions read, *“King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared,”* ^{NASB} *“This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar,”* ^{NIV} and *“O King Nebuchadnezzar, this message is for you!”* ^{NLT} There is no vagueness or ambiguity. The message is to the point and arresting. In the very midst of carnal boasting, a voice from heaven breaks through the delusion of the king and declares the wrong one is talking. Heaven will not allow the king to speak any longer. The heavens do rule, and they will do the speaking.

The Kingdom Is Departed

SO FAR AS THE RECORD IS CONCERNED, GOD HAD NEVER BEFORE SPOKEN DIRECTLY TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR. HE HAD SENT DREAMS AND THOUGHTS INTO HIS HEAD WHILE HE WAS UPON HIS BED. BUT THE MESSAGES THEMSELVES WERE DELIVERED TO THE KING BY DANIEL – AT LEAST UP TO THIS POINT. NOW GOD SPEAKS MORE DIRECTLY TO THE KING, AND WITH LESS TOLERANCE THAN BEFORE.

more directly to the king, and with less tolerance than before.

It is ever true, *“He, that being often reprov’d hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”* (Prov 29:1). It is true that the judgment of Nebuchadnezzar was not, from one point of view, *“without remedy.”* Yet, from another view, it was, indeed, *“without remedy,”* for it could not be averted, or even postponed for a single hour. Daniel had told the king he might be able to prolong the judgment by breaking off his sins and doing righteously (4:27). Having ignored that counsel, the word of his demise now comes directly from heaven to Nebuchadnezzar.

THE KINGDOM IS DEPARTED

“ . . . saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The

Other versions read, *“sovereignty has been removed from you,”* ^{NASB} *“royal authority has been taken from you,”* ^{NIV} *“You are no longer ruler of this kingdom,”* ^{NLT} and *“the empire has been taken from you.”* ^{NJB}

You may recall that a similar word was spoken to king Saul. *“But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee”* (1 Sam 13:14). In the case of king Saul, by a word from heaven, the kingdom was wrested from and given to David. God *“rejected”* Saul from being king (1 Sam 15:23; 16:1).

Now, the Lord who gave Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom takes it

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from him. Unlike Saul, it will not be given to another, but will be held in tact until God is satisfied the king has learned what is intended by this judgment.

This is an incident in which we are apprised of the cause of the king's fall. This is not, however, always the case. That is, we are not always told of the specific reason for the thrusting down of a powerful ruler. But in all cases, and with no exceptions, "God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another" (Psa 75:7).

This is such a prominent thread of truth that Mary, the mother of our Lord, confessed it in her marvelous response to

the revelation of God. "He hath put down the mighty from their seats" (Luke 1:52). Jesus also reminded us, "every one that exalteth himself shall be abased" (Lk 18:14). David said, "He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way" (Psa 107:40). In keeping with the imagery of the tree in the king's dream, Ezekiel spoke of the Lord bringing down "the high tree" (Ezek 17:24).

A Western World Inhibition

We give thanks for the congenial government under which we live, not taking the liberties we enjoy for granted. There is, however, a certain inhibition related to democracy of which we do well

to be aware. Too often, God is not acknowledged in the process of Presidents being raised up or deposed. The raising up and putting down of rulers is not limited to the kings of ancient times, or to governments ruled by a single individual. While we may not be able to precisely identify the hand of the Lord, we are to believe it is present in affairs of the State. **A strong and healthy awareness of the Lord in all things will contribute to the peace and tranquility of the soul.** Whether it is Babylon or the United States, it is God who raises up rulers and casts them down. God has not abdicated to democracy! An understanding of this will serve to promote humility. It will also build confidence in those who believe.

THEY SHALL DRIVE THEE FROM MEN

"³² And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."

In the matter of WHEN this judgment would come, the king had a

imposed upon him. Those who are admonished by God will be given time to respond. But that is not a perpetual privilege. **When God's Spirit ceases to strive with men, the opportunity of choice is brought to a grinding halt.**

We do not know the precise time when the privilege of choice will be withdrawn from men, but we do well to not tempt the Lord our God on the

grace with no interest in eternal things, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31).

THEY SHALL DRIVE THEE FROM MEN

"And they shall drive thee from men . . ." The NRSV reads, "you will be driven away from human society." Although he was an offspring of Adam, the king would no longer have a place among his peers. That is how precise God can be in His righteous judgments.

Once again, there is no choice here – no summons to repent, no plea for awakening. The time of longsuffering had ended, and Nebuchadnezzar would not be allowed to dwell among men – even though he himself was a man. Even sinful men, idolaters, magicians and sorcerers would not want him around. **That is how repulsive God can make a person!**

You may recall that a judgment of this manner was brought upon Cain. Although it was not precisely the same as that of Nebuchadnezzar, it was similar in some respects. After the Lord had imposed His judgment upon Cain, he responded, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and

THOSE WHO ARE ADMONISHED BY GOD WILL BE GIVEN TIME TO RESPOND. BUT THAT IS NOT A PERPETUAL PRIVILEGE. WHEN GOD'S SPIRIT CEASES TO STRIVE WITH MEN, THE OPPORTUNITY OF CHOICE IS BROUGHT TO A GRINDING HALT.

choice. Daniel counseled him, "Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness, and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity" (4:27). But the king will have no choice in this matter. Here is a judgment that will be imposed upon him, like the dethroning of king Saul was

matter. In Noah's day, the destruction of the world was decreed following a long period of Divine longsuffering. **The hundred and twenty years that were given were not time for the world to repent, but for Noah to complete the ark by which he saved his house.** Whether we are speaking of those in the days of Noah, Nebuchadnezzar, or those who are meandering through this day of

a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me" (Gen 4:13-14). In a singular act of mercy, God pronounced a judgment upon any who would take the life of Cain.

If you have ever had a fear of being isolated from everyone, with no place among the living, you do well to ponder the judgment of king Nebuchadnezzar. That is precisely what happened to him. Be responsive to God. He is able to keep you from such a state, as well as put you into it

DWELLING WITH THE BEASTS

" . . . and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee . . ." The words "beasts of the field" are translated "wild beasts" in the NIV. Other versions read the same way: "wild beasts of the field," Septuagint "wild animals,"^{NLT/NJB/DOUAY}

The term "beasts of the field" generally denote undomesticated animals, as distinguished from "flocks" and "herds" tended by an individual. When Israel entered Canaan, the Lord drove out the nations occupying the land "little by little," "lest the beasts of the field increase" upon the land, becoming too numerous for them to handle (Deut 7:22). When David faced Goliath, the giant said he was going to feed David's flesh to "the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field" (1 Sam 17:44). David also declared "the wild beasts of the field" belonged to God (Psa 50:11).

Nebuchadnezzar, therefore, would not be simply put among the domesticated and well cared for cattle of the country. He would be "in the wild," so to speak, with no certain dwelling place – wandering here and there, searching for sprigs of grass for which he would now have a hearty appetite.

Men would no longer be able to tolerate his presence, but he would fit in well with the untamed and impersonal creatures of the wild. Now he would compete with beasts for the grass of the field, until seven long years had passed.

I can only imagine what fear must have struck the heart of

Nebuchadnezzar when he heard these words. Ample time was given to the king to know full well what was coming upon him from the Lord.

UNTIL YOU KNOW

" . . . until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men,

excellent example of NOT knowing something to which you were knowledgeable exposed. You may recall this incident. It is full of instruction for us. On one occasion, Jesus departed from the multitudes and entered into a ship with His disciples. In their haste, the disciples forgot to bring bread, and

IF YOU HAVE EVER HAD A FEAR OF BEING ISOLATED FROM EVERYONE, WITH NO PLACE AMONG THE LIVING, YOU DO WELL TO PONDER THE JUDGMENT OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR. THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM. BE RESPONSIVE TO GOD. HE IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM SUCH A STATE, AS WELL AS PUT YOU INTO IT

and giveth it to whomsoever He will."

Here again, the words spoken to him previously by the prophet Daniel, fall from heaven upon his ears. Here are two matters he has forgotten, though told them twice: "the Most High is Sovereign over the kingdoms of men," and He gives those kingdoms "to anyone He wishes."^{NIV} He heard a watcher from heaven say these words in his dream (4:17), and Daniel repeated them in the interpretation of that dream (4:25).

The word "know," therefore, does not mean a mere increase in factual knowledge. It involves more than being exposed to the truth of reference, for Nebuchadnezzar had already been exposed to this. However, this had not sunk down into his ears (Lk 9:44). The words had not registered upon his heart or dawned upon his conscience. **He could not associate his own state with the fact of God's universal and unquestionable dominion.**

An Example of Obtuseness

Nebuchadnezzar was, at this point, like the disciples who had not yet seen the significance of Jesus feeding the multitude – that is, they could not apply it to their circumstance. Here is a most

consequently had no more than "one loaf." As they proceeded on their journey, Jesus "charged them saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod." The disciples reasoned among themselves saying, "It is because we have no bread." Jesus then upbraided them because of their hardened hearts, asking why they did not understand. He then reminded them of events in which they themselves had been involved. "When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven." One can almost see the Lord shaking His head saying, "How is it that ye do not understand?" (Mark 8:13-21).

The disciples were not able to handle the truth that was revealed in the feeding of the multitudes. They could not relate it to their present circumstance. Academically, they knew the answers to Christ's questions, and would have received the highest grade in a worldly classroom. **But they failed the Divine examination because they really did not know.**

This is the situation with the king. He had been told the Most High ruled

over all, and could no doubt have recited those words in an academic environment. But God does not make things known so we can recall them from an academic point of view. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar will learn this truth by personal experience. Then it will register more fully upon his understanding.

proud He knoweth afar off.
(Psa 138:6)

- ▣ ***“The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.”***
(Prov 15:25)
- ▣ ***“And I will punish the world for their***

yourself unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” (1 Pet 5:5)

The proud are those who conduct their lives as though there was no God – no one to whom they were accountable, and from whom every single benefit they have was derived. Like Nebuchadnezzar, they imagine their successes are their own doing, and therefore are not noted for thanksgiving or praise.

One of the great jeopardies of our time is the promotion of pride. Nearly the entire fabric of Western society encourages and feeds pride. Little in the social structure encourage humility or discourage pride. Too often, the dreadful propensity to human pride is not checked within the church. **With its inclination toward entertainment, organization, and institutionalism, pride easily surfaces and flourishes among the very people who have been called to humility and the knowledge of God.**

We do well to tune our hearts to learn from king Nebuchadnezzar! The record of his experience can be an effective teacher, if we will allow it. It can effectively warn, admonish, comfort, and instruct us in the ways of the Lord. Sit at these blessed table and feed your soul. It will do you good.

WITH ITS INCLINATION TOWARD ENTERTAINMENT, ORGANIZATION, AND INSTITUTIONALISM, PRIDE EASILY SURFACES AND FLOURISHES AMONG THE VERY PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED TO HUMILITY AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

APPLICATION

This judgment fell upon the king when he was lifted up in pride. The Scriptures make clear how God regards the proud – those who boast of their own achievements while they are occupying the Lord’s world and living under His government.

- ▣ ***“Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.”*** (Psa 119:21)
- ▣ ***“Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the***

evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.” (Isa 13:11)

- ▣ ***“He hath showed strength with his arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.”***(Luke 1:51)
- ▣ ***“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”***
(James 4:6)
- ▣ ***“Likewise, ye younger, submit***

THE SAME HOUR

“³³ The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.”

The events that follow are the fulfillment of a heavenly decree. **They were not the result of any natural process of degeneration, but were imposed upon the king by the God of heaven.** This is something God can do

whenever He wills. The fact that He does not do so repeatedly confirms He is longsuffering. Nevertheless, men are not to abuse that longsuffering. The proud will be abased in due season with a punishment far worse than that endured by Nebuchadnezzar.

THE SAME HOUR

“The same hour was the thing fulfilled . . . ” The judgment was swift – within a matter of minutes. There was time to anticipate the dreadful curse, but no time or ability to avert it. There was time for terror to fill the heart, but no time

for peace to enter. Solomon once said, ***“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil”*** (Eccl 8:11). But that is not the case here. God does not always delay His judgments, and men should **not** proceed through life as though He did.

- ▣ When Elisha’s servant took a reward from Naaman – a reward the prophet had rejected – he was instantly stricken with leprosy (2 Kgs 5:27).
- ▣ When Uzziah took it upon himself to

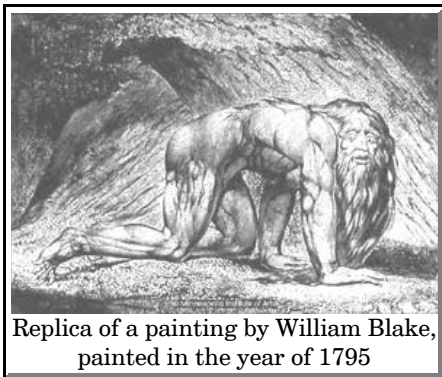
burn incense as though he was a priest, leprosy rose up in his forehead that very instant (2 Chron 26:19).

- ▣ When Uzzah put forth his hand to steady the ark of the covenant, which was not to be touched, he was immediately struck dead by the Lord (2 Sam 6:7).
- ▣ When Herod received the praises of the people as though he was a god, the angel of the Lord immediately smote him, and he died (Acts 12:23).
- ▣ When Ananias and Sapphira lied about their giving, the Lord instantly struck Ananias dead, and three hours later when Peter confronted Sapphira, she was instantly struck dead also (Acts 5:5,10).

Thus the king was judged immediately – *“the same hour.”* **Serious people must recognize God is quite capable of instant judgment.** Such knowledge will promote both fear and humility in those possessing it. It will provide them with another reason for not sinning, and another cause for resisting the devil and quenching his fiery darts with the good shield of faith.

DRIVEN FROM MEN

“ . . . and he was driven from men . . . ” In precise fulfillment of the Word of God, the king was thrust from the society of men, who bear God’s image, taking up residency with the beasts who do not bare that image. Just as surely as Lot’s wife was turned into a pillar of salt (Gen 19:26), Nebuchadnezzar was so altered as to forfeit a right to dwell among men.



Replica of a painting by William Blake, painted in the year of 1795

He Did Eat Grass

“ . . . and did eat grass as oxen . . . ”

SERIOUS PEOPLE MUST RECOGNIZE GOD IS QUITE CAPABLE OF INSTANT JUDGMENT. SUCH KNOWLEDGE WILL PROMOTE BOTH FEAR AND HUMILITY IN THOSE POSSESSING IT. IT WILL PROVIDE THEM WITH ANOTHER REASON FOR NOT SINNING, AND ANOTHER CAUSE FOR RESISTING THE DEVIL AND QUENCHING HIS FIERY DARTS WITH THE GOOD SHIELD OF FAITH.

It is clear that he now ate grass out of preference – that is how God *“made”* him do it. His heart was changed from that of a man to that of a beast (4:16). **Thus his manners were so altered that grass became his food of choice.**

His Body Was Wet

“ . . . and his body was wet with the dew of heaven . . . ” That is, he was without any clothing – stripped of every vestige of his kingly dignity, as well as the normal respect afforded to men. Imagine the most significant king in all of the earth, stripped of his royal apparel, and lying naked in the open field. Truly, *“whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased”* (Matt 23:12). This will eventually happen to all who exalt themselves. God provided us a preview of this determination in king Nebuchadnezzar. If we will allow it to do so, his record will promote humility within us.

His Hairs Grew Like Eagles Feathers

“ . . . till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers . . . ” There was such an alteration in Nebuchadnezzar’s physical constitution that his hair grew long like an eagles’ feathers. His hair was not cut for seven years, and during that long period probably grew thick, black, and strong. This is a detail that was not included in Daniel’s interpretation. We see, therefore, that the judgment of God was even worse than described by the prophet of God.

His Nails Were Like Birds’ Claws

“ . . . and his nails like birds’ claws.” There are some who believe *“seven times”* means seven days, seven

weeks, or seven months – but not seven years. This passage confirms this could not have been the case. Nebuchadnezzar was not instantly transformed into the form of a beast. His hair **grew** into the likeness of eagles’ feathers, and his nails **grew** into the likeness of a birds claws – long and sharp. **In other words, over the period of his judgment, his condition grew worse, not better.**

At least two valuable lessons can be learned here. **First**, that God’s judgments are severe, and do not become better or less severe with the passing of time. That is another reason *“it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* (Heb 10:31). **Second**, pride is not easily subdued within men. Those who allow it to rise in their hearts will find it does not leave easily. In the case of Nebuchadnezzar, it took seven years to root it out of him.

In order to illustrate the depths to which a person can descend when deprived of their mind, I provide the following excerpt from The Second Annual Report of the Prison Discipline Society. It describes the condition of patients before being admitted to an insane asylum, and reflects conditions in the state of Massachusetts during the nineteenth century.

“No. 1. Had been in prison twenty-eight years when he was brought to the Institution. During seven years he had not felt the influence of fire, and many nights he had not lain down for fear of freezing. He had not been shaved for twenty-eight years, and had been provoked and excited by the introduction of hundreds to see the exhibition of his raving.

No. 2. Had been in one prison fourteen years: he was

naked — his hair and beard grown long — and his skin so entirely filled with the dust of charcoal as to render it impossible, from its appearance, to discover what nation he was of. He was in the habit of screaming so loud as to annoy the whole neighborhood, and was considered a most dangerous and desperate man.

No. 3. An old man of seventy years of age or more; had been chained for twenty-five years, and had his chain taken off but once in that time.

No. 4. A female: had so long been confined with a short chain as wholly to lose the use of her lower limbs. Her health had been materially impaired by confinement, and

she was unable to stand, and had not walked for years.

No. 8. Had been ten years without clothes: a most inconceivably filthy and degraded being: exceedingly violent and outrageous.

No. 9. Another female, exceedingly filthy in her habits, had not worn clothes for two years, during which time she had been confined in a filthy cell, destitute of everything like comfort, tearing everything in pieces that was given her.

No. 10. Had been insane eight years: almost the whole of the time in jail and in a cage. ”BARNES COMMENTARY ON DANIEL

If the above things could take place over 1,800 years after Jesus had spoiled principalities and powers, one can only imagine to what extent they could have occurred to Nebuchadnezzar — particularly since his was a focused and purposeful judgment from God Himself.

It is sobering to think of these things. You must not retire at the end of the day without thanking God for a sound mind. Truly, it is a blessing to have one!

AT THE END OF THE DAYS

“³⁴ And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an

be the better known. He was surely God’s servant when he came against Judah (Jer 27:6). Now he is serving God in an even more lofty capacity, declaring that He rules over the affairs of men, whether they recognize it or not.

Divine determinations and control. **They are epochs that are managed by the Lord.** Some of them include *“the times of the Gentiles”* (Lk 21:24), *“times of refreshing”* (Acts 3:21), *“the times of the restitution of all things”* (Acts 3:21), and *“the times of ignorance”* that preceded the coming of Christ (Acts 17:30). It is the business of God’s people to *“know the times,”* not having to be taught as Nebuchadnezzar (Matt 16:3; Rom 13:11).

I LIFTED UP MY EYES

“ . . . I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven . . . ” Other versions read, *“lifted my eyes to heaven,”* NKJV *“raised my eyes toward heaven,”* NASB and *“looked up to heaven.”* NLT He went to graze in the field against his will — **driven** from among men. However, at the conclusion of his judgment, he voluntarily and insightfully looked up into heaven — more precisely, to the *“God of heaven”* (2:18,19,27,44).

IT IS APPARENT THAT NEBUCHADNEZZAR RECALLED NOTHING OF THAT DREADFUL TIME IN THE OPEN FIELD. HE WAS GIVEN THE HEART OF A BEAST, AND HIS REASON DEPARTED FROM HIM. THE ONLY SEMBLANCE OF HUMANITY THAT REMAINED WITH HIM WAS HIS BODY — AND THAT WAS GREATLY DISTORTED IN BOTH APPEARANCE AND MANNERS.

everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation . . . ”

It is apparent that Nebuchadnezzar recalled nothing of that dreadful time in the open field. He was given the heart of a beast, and his reason departed from him. The only semblance of humanity that remained with him was his body — and that was greatly distorted in both appearance and manners.

But now, Nebuchadnezzar is proclaiming to whole world what happened to him, and what he has learned from it. He is doing this so that God may

AT THE END OF THE DAYS

“And at the end of the days . . . ” The phrase *“end of the days”* denotes the end of the appointed period in which he was driven from among men. The total length determined was fulfilled — seven years. From one point of view, it was an appointment of seven years. From another, those seven years were made up of days — one miserable day at a time!

Neither Satan nor man could make it shorter or longer. Truly, *“times”* are in the hand of the Lord, whether for blessing or cursing, benefit or judgment (Psa 31:15; Acts 1:7).

In Scripture, *“times”* speak of

You may recall that Jesus is said to have done this precise thing in the garden: *“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven”* (John 17:1). This is an act of recognition, and denotes a sense of dependency as well as understanding.

MY UNDERSTANDING RETURNED

“ . . . and mine understanding returned unto me . . . ” Other versions read, *“my reason returned unto me,”* NASB *“my sanity was restored,”* NIV *“my sense was restored to me,”* DOUAY For seven years God took all rationality from the king, and now He had given it back.

I have often pondered how Nebuchadnezzar felt when he suddenly came to himself while grazing in a field. Perhaps it was during the night, when the dew of heaven was heavy upon him. Whenever it was, a sudden transition was made from having no mind to having a clear mind, from having the senses of a beast to being keenly aware of the God of heaven. Perhaps his reason returned to him when he began to look toward the heavens, from whence all help comes. Before this time, he may have pointed toward heaven and howled with the other beasts. But this time his reason returned to him.

I BLESSED THE MOST HIGH

“ . . . and I blessed the most High . . . ” As soon as his reason returned to him, Nebuchadnezzar’s mind went back to the voice he heard just prior to being driven out from men. **It appears to me that he was instantly able to associate where he was and how he looked with the message he received from heaven seven years earlier.** We understand this to have occurred in the forty-second year of his reign, and approximately 1-2 years before his death.

It seems reasonable to say the king had been cavorting about on all fours, eating grass with the wild beasts, for seven years. But now, it is as though he rose to his full height as a man and looked up into heaven. The brightness of the sun was superceded by the gracious return of his powers of reason. He therefore “*blessed God,*” from a thankful heart.

The possession of a “*sound mind*” is something for which God is to be blessed! He experienced what the Gadarene demoniac did when he came to possess - a “*right mind*” (Mk 5:15). On an even grander scale, he “*came to himself*” like the prodigal (Lk 15:17). There was only one proper reaction. **BLESS GOD!** Extol Him, and give Him thanks! And, bless God, the king knew what to say!

I PRAISED AND HONORED HIM

“ . . . and I praised and honored Him that liveth for ever . . . ” Other versions read “*honored and glorified,*”^{NIV} “*praised Him . . . and gave Him glory,*”^{Septuagint} and “*praised and worshiped.*”^{NLT}

Perhaps the beasts of the field

heard him – the ones with whom he had been grazing for seven long years. The judgment was over, and Nebuchadnezzar could instantly, rationally, and effectively, give praise and honor to God. **Even though he had been out of commission, so to speak, for seven years, he did not need a praise leader to get him started.** A person with understanding can move into the praise and honor of God instantly, for such are aware of His Person and power.

Assyrian empire. His rule included the vast area over which Nebuchadnezzar was king. His empire included Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar and his armies! **There is no place or time, past, present, or future, in which God does not have absolute and total dominion.** Every other form of authority is under Him, answerable to Him, and dominated by Him. It is in this sense that we read, “*For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever.*”

YOU WILL NOTE THAT AT THE VERY INSTANT THE KING’S UNDERSTANDING RETURNED, HIS PRAISE AND HONOR OF GOD BEGAN. IT TOOK A WHILE FOR HIS HAIR TO LOOK LIKE EAGLES’ FEATHERS. TO REQUIRED A SEASON BEFORE HIS NAILS LOOKED LIKE THE CLAWS OF A GIANT BIRD. BUT IT DID NOT TAKE LONG FOR HIS TONGUE TO BE LOOSED WHEN UNDERSTANDING WAS RESTORED TO HIM.

Only those who lack this perception are tardy in their responses to the Lord.

You will note that at the very instant the king’s understanding returned, his praise and honor of God began. It took a while for his hair to look like eagles’ feathers. To required a season before his nails looked like the claws of a giant bird. But it did not take long for his tongue to be loosed when understanding was restored to him.

“*Praise*” and “*honor*” are similar words, though not identical. Both have to do with the perception of the Person and purpose of God. “*Praise*” accentuates the adoration of God, while “*honor*” stresses giving Him glory through articulation.

AN EVERLASTING DOMINION

“ . . . whose dominion is an everlasting dominion . . . ” Other versions read, “*His dominion is an eternal dominion,*”^{NIV} “*His sovereignty is an everlasting sovereignty,*”^{NRSV} “*His power is an everlasting power,*”^{DOUAY} “*whose rule is an eternal rule,*”^{BBE} and “*His empire is an everlasting empire.*”^{NJB}

The dominion of God included Babylon. His Sovereignty was over the Chaldeans. His power was over the

Amen” (Rom 11:36).

When it comes to adversarial or heathen powers, whether Satan, principalities and powers, or some form of human government, God disposes of them at will. When, for example, His purposes for the world have been fulfilled, and we embark on “*the ages to come,*” God will simply take the devil, his hosts, and every form of wicked influence, and cast them into the lake of fire (Rev 10:10). It will happen as suddenly and incontrovertibly as Nebuchadnezzar being driven away from human society. Of course, in that case, no one will recover as Nebuchadnezzar did. However, and make no mistake about this, if the God of heaven had not willed for the king of Babylon to recover, there is no possible way that a recovery could have been effected.

All of that, and more, is involved in God’s “*dominion*” being an “*everlasting dominion.*”

HIS KINGDOM FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

“ . . . and His kingdom is from generation to generation . . . ” The Kingdom of God IS, and in all of history there was never a time when it was not.

When we read of His Kingdom coming (Matt 6:10; Mark 9:1; 12:28; Luke 10:9), or being *“at hand”* (Matt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Luke 21:31), we are reading of the **revelation** of the Kingdom, and not the Kingdom itself.

There is no generation over which the God of heaven does not preside. There are no time-gaps in His Kingdom, no generation that has been strictly on its own. Even a reprobate generation like

that of Noah’s day found that *“the heavens do rule”* (Matt 24:39). The energetic builders in a plain in the land of Shinar found that God is *“over all”* (Gen 11:2-9). The defiled cities of Sodom and Gomorrah found out that God’s *“dominion”* was in their generation also (Gen 19:25,29).

Candidly, I do not know why more of this is not declared in the contemporary church. To many, this is a first-time

message. Such things ought not to be, Rest assured, the dominion of God has extended into our generation, and prevails at this time. It took seven years in the field, deprived of all reason, for Nebuchadnezzar to learn this. Those in Christ can learn it more fully and profitably, being given many details about the reign of God through Christ Jesus. Furthermore, the knowledge of His dominion and kingdom generates strong hope in the heart of the believer.

THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH FROM HEAVEN’S VIEW

“³⁵ And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?”

It is possible for a person to speak highly of God, but simply do it by rote. Or intellectual; mechanics – like reciting a speech, or answering a test question. But that is not how Nebuchadnezzar is

what they do NOT mean.

You must aggressively push such notions from you. Nebuchadnezzar did speak these words, but they are as surely inspired by God as anything could possibly be. There is no way the king of Babylon could have known these things, or have been able to put them into words, apart from the inspiration of the Almighty. Further, the Holy Spirit would not have allowed these words to be written in Scripture if they were not precisely

^{NASB} *“are regarded as nothing,”* ^{NIV} and *“count for nothing.”* ^{NJB} Here a comparison is being made with God Himself, who has the dominion and owns the kingdom. The king does not make a comparison with himself and God. Nor, indeed, does he group himself with all of the nobles of Babylon and make the comparison. He takes all of the inhabitants of the world together. He gathers them from all ages, and puts them on the Divine scales together.

And what is the result of placing all *“the inhabitants of the earth”* on the scales with God Almighty? The scales do not even move! **Together, earth’s inhabitants as are a weightless mote of dust!** Their combined names are nothing, Their united power is nothing. Their aggregate will is nothing.

Isaiah said it this way, *“Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering: All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him **less than nothing**, and vanity”* (Isa 40:15-17).

Hear the prophet again as he declares one of the heavenly perspectives of humanity. *“It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and **the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers**; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: That bringeth*

IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A PERSON TO SPEAK HIGHLY OF GOD, BUT SIMPLY DO IT BY ROTE. OR INTELLECTUAL; MECHANICS – LIKE RECITING A SPEECH, OR ANSWERING A TEST QUESTION. BUT THAT IS NOT HOW NEBUCHADNEZZAR IS SPEAKING. HE IS SPEAKING FROM THE WELL OF UNDERSTANDING, NOT THE BROKEN CISTERN OF MEMORY

speaking. **He is speaking from the well of understanding, not the broken cistern of memory.** His words are the result of Divine learning, or enlightenment, not an pedantic process.

The words now confessed by Nebuchadnezzar ought to be most common within the church – but they are not. I know from experience that many are unable to frame these words, or say them without an elaborate explanation of

correct.

Remember, Nebuchadnezzar is proclaiming these words throughout the entire world. This is one reason God raised him up, and seven years in the open field has prepared him to say these words with power and conviction.

REPUTED AS NOTHING

“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing . . . ” Other versions read, *“are accounted as nothing,”*

the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and He shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble” (Isa 40:22-24).

On yet another occasion, the Lord told Isaiah to cry out. When Isaiah asked what he should shout out, God told him precisely what to say. *“The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? **All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever”**(Isa 40:6-8).*

When, therefore, we speak of the dignity of man, it is only within the purpose of God that such dignity exists. Apart and alienated from God, man obtains no significance whatsoever. If there is any goodness in him, it is because of the grace of God (1 Cor 15:10).

Remember, we are viewing *“the inhabitants of the earth”* in comparison to the mighty God of heaven. **If you were to assign a numeric value to every personality from Adam to the end of the world, giving that number according to inherent worth, the sum total of humanity would be “0” – nothing!** They were all created by God and are answerable to God. They can cause nothing that will endure, and cannot change one jot or tittle that the Lord has spoken. All of them have been deceived. All of them have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All of them need deliverance. They are together *“reputed as nothing.”*

HIS WILL IN THE ARMY OF HEAVEN

“ . . . and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven . . . ” Other versions read *“the host of heaven,”*^{NASB} *“the powers of heaven,”*^{NIV} *“the forces of the heavens,”*^{YLT} and *“the angels of heaven.”*^{NLT}

Elsewhere this amalgamation of heavenly personalities is called *“the host*

of heaven.” Micaiah the prophet saw them all standing on the right and left hand of God Almighty (1 Kgs 22:19; 2 Chron 18:18). Nehemiah affirmed this vast host worshiped the Lord (Neh 9:6). When Jesus was born, a multitude of these hosts were heard praising God (Lk 2:13). No less than two-hundred and forty-four times God is referred to as “the LORD of hosts” (ex, 1 Sam 1:3; 2 Sam 6:2; 1 Kgs 18:15; 2 Kgs 19:31; 1 Chron 11:9; Psa 24:10; Isa 1:9; Jer 6:6; Micah 4:4; Nahum 2:13; Hab 2:13; Zeph 2:9; Hag 1:1; Zech 1:3; Mal 1:13). Isaiah mentions this phrase fifty-three times, Jeremiah

those who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb 1:13-14).

This illimitable host is **for** the saints and **against** the wicked. They will pluck up the wicked from the earth at once, and gather all of the saints to be joined forever with the Lord. They are, in every sense, an *“army,”* and with one heart they do the will of God. He alone can marshal them, send them, order them, and command their attention. It is good they are for the saints!

We all do well to be **more** mindful

WHEN, THEREFORE, WE SPEAK OF THE DIGNITY OF MAN, IT IS ONLY WITHIN THE PURPOSE OF GOD THAT SUCH DIGNITY EXISTS. APART AND ALIENATED FROM GOD, MAN OBTAINS NO SIGNIFICANCE WHATSOEVER. IF THERE IS ANY GOODNESS IN HIM, IT IS BECAUSE OF THE GRACE OF GOD

seventy-one times, Zechariah fifty-three times, and Malachi twenty-four times. The book of Haggai contains only 38 verses, yet refers to *“the LORD of hosts”* fourteen times.

There is a vast sea of personalities in the heavenly realms. They include cherubim (Psa 80:1) – mentioned sixty-four times in Scripture, seraphim (Isa 6:2,6), arch-angels (1 Thess 4:16), living creatures (Rev 4:6), an innumerable company of angels (Heb 12:22), and principalities and powers (Eph 3:10).

These all do the bidding of the Lord. They were present at Sinai, and even spoke the Law (Deut 33:2), and one slew Sennacherib’s army of 185,000 (2 Kgs 19:35). An angel went before Israel to drive the inhabitants out of Canaan (Ex 33:2). Two of this number utterly destroyed Sodom and the cities of the plain (Gen 19:1-15). Some of this number are charged with the care of little ones (Matt 18:10). The entire body of holy angels are charged with ministering to

of this remarkable multitude of spirits than puny man, *“whose breath is in his nostrils”* (Isa 2:22).

HIS WILL AMONG THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH

“ . . . and among the inhabitants of the earth . . . ” God also has His will among *“the peoples of the earth.”*^{NIV} As in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, that will can be imposed upon men – **but it will be done.** When Jesus instructed us to pray for the will of the Lord to be done on earth, He was speaking the **manner** in which it was done: *“as it is in heaven.”* That involves willingness on the part of earth’s inhabitants. But whether they are willing or not, the will of the Lord will be done. It may involve giving Nebuchadnezzar the heart of a beast, causing Pharaoh and his armies to be overthrown, or striking Herod dead – **but it will be done!**

God does desire to show mercy, which is His preference. But if men will not receive that mercy, they will be the victims of God’s will, not its beneficiaries.

When it comes to the clash of the human will with the will of God, let none be so foolish as to imagine God will not prevail! That is the sense of our text. In the end, someone's will must prevail. A state of conflict between the Divine will and the opposing will of man cannot continue.

In the end, all opposing desires will be violently cast down, and the will of God alone will be left standing. He has

determined Word of God goes out for judgment or for blessing, none can turn that decree aside. Whom God has blessed cannot be cursed, and whom God has cursed cannot be blessed. As corrupt as Balaam was, even he knew this (Num 23:19-23).

When God sent the flood, it was not possible for any to resist it. When the Lord caused the work at Babel to cease, no person or group of persons could keep it

I realize it has become quite fashionable these days to say one is angry or upset with God. But it is most foolish to speak in this manner. Solomon warned men of speaking foolishly before an angel. *"Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?"* (Eccl 5:6). If this is true of God's messenger, how much more of God Himself?

When the text states no one can say to God, *"What are You doing?"* it does not mean these words cannot erupt from man's mouth. Rather, it means **such responses are never legitimate and are always in vain.** Man is to yield to the will of God, not question it!

A FINAL WORD ON THIS

Although I have made mention of this once before, I again want to declare how this type of teaching is not found in the church-circles in which I traveled. With the exception of my good father, I have heard very few men declare this aspect of God with power. During our times, the situation has become much worse. Whole congregations are being fed with miserably meager spiritual diets. The bent of the preaching and teaching is leaving the people thinking more of their circumstances than of God's Person and purpose. I am going to wax bold and say that the preaching of our day is responsible for the fallen state of the church. It is no wonder people often lack a strong faith. They hear precious little about the One in whom their faith is to be placed. Consequently, at best, they have *"little faith"* and *"slow hearts."*

What Nebuchadnezzar found so difficult to lean is quickly and pleasantly learned at the feet of Jesus. The Gospel of Christ contains infinitely more than Nebuchadnezzar's dream or what he learned at the end of seven long years. Nebuchadnezzar's knowledge was like the border of the promised land. In Christ Jesus we come into the heart of land, where rich and satisfying fruits are found. Be discontent if you have less understanding of God than Nebuchadnezzar did! You have been given more, and God expects more from you.

I AM GOING TO WAX BOLD AND SAY THAT THE PREACHING OF OUR DAY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FALLEN STATE OF THE CHURCH. IT IS NO WONDER PEOPLE OFTEN LACK A STRONG FAITH. THEY HEAR PRECIOUS LITTLE ABOUT THE ONE IN WHOM THEIR FAITH IS TO BE PLACED.

His will among the inhabitants of the earth. It only remains for us to be in accord with that will. God be praised for a glorious Gospel that provides a means for us to be *"willing in the day of His power"* (Psa 110:3)! In a way, considering the rudimentary knowledge Nebuchadnezzar had, it is remarkable that he saw this truth. Yet, from another perspective, considering the extent to which God has revealed Himself in Christ Jesus, it is even more remarkable that it is so little known in our day!

NONE CAN STAY HIS HAND

"... and none can stay His hand . . ." Other versions read, *"No one can restrain His hand,"* ^{NKJV} *"No one can ward off His hand,"* ^{NASB} *"No one can hold back His hand,"* ^{NIV} *"there is none who shall withstand His power,"* ^{Septuagint} and *"No one can stop Him."* ^{NLT}

It is true that Moses so moved God as to delay the punishment of the unbelieving and wicked Israelites (Ex 32:1-14). Even in this case, Moses himself did not stay the judgment, but did so by appealing to God's nature, and His good promise to Abraham.

However, our text is not speaking of that type of circumstance. Rather, it is referring to Divine determinations that are, as it were cast in stone. Once the

going. When God delivered Israel from Egypt, it was not possible for that deliverance to be stopped. When God gave Goliath to David, none could stay His hand. When He set Himself against Sihon and Og, it was not possible for them to stand. When He decreed that Nebuchadnezzar overthrow Judah and take the people captive, no one could stop it from happening. When He sent His Son into the world, none could thwart it. And, when, in the end, Jesus sends the angels to gather out the wicked and bring the sons to glory, it simply will not be possible to interfere with that work. None can stay His hand!

NONE CAN SAY "WHAT DOESST THOU?"

"... or say unto Him, What dost Thou?" Other versions read, *"What have you done?"* ^{NKJV} *"What are you doing?"* ^{NRSV} and *"What do you mean by doing these things?"* ^{NLT}

This is what Isaiah would call *"striving with your Maker"* (Isa 45:9). Such questions are foolish, and provoke the Lord, for He does not give account of any of His matters (Job 33:13). This is equivalent to Moses' expression, *"the secret things belong unto God"* (Deut 29:29). Paul would say it this way, *"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?"* (Rom 11:34).

Rest assured, if God wanted Nebuchadnezzar to know what he has just

confessed, it is profitable to you also. This is an aspect of His Person concerning

which we dare not be ignorant. It is something all the world must know.

THE RETURN OF THE KING'S REASON

“³⁶ At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me; and my counselors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.”

All of this marvelous change began when Nebuchadnezzar looked up to heaven. In a moment of time he went from looking at grass to looking up to heaven. He heart went from that of a senseless beast, to one of high reasoning, the likes of which precious few men had seen at that time. This is the fulfillment of Daniel's interpretation, *“And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule”* (4:26).

In this we have a singular display of the mercy of our God. You sense that Nebuchadnezzar saw something of this mercy, and we do well to see it also. **You will find precious few heathen kings that recovered from Divine judgment. Search and see.** Pharaoh (Ex 14:28), Sihon (Num 21:21-35), Og (Num 21:33-35), Arad (Num 21:1-3), Agag (1 Sam 15:8,33), Sennacherib (Isa 37:37-38), and Herod (Acts 12:22-23) – they all went down in shame and defeat, and did not recover. Nebuchadnezzar did!

MY REASON RETURNED UNTO ME

“At the same time my reason returned unto me . . .” Other versions read, *“my sanity was restored,”*^{NIV} *“my sense returned to me,”*^{DOUAY} and *“understanding returned unto me.”*^{DARBY}

Here Nebuchadnezzar appears to repeat what he had said previously: *“And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me”* (4:34). Now he says, *“At the same*

time my reason returned unto me.” He said this, no doubt, to ensure the multitudes hearing his proclamation that it was **not** a rash or fearful outburst. This was a word framed by an understanding heart, not a manipulated vassal. Also, however, it seems to me that the king's understanding was being enhanced. First and preeminently, understanding was given to him in order to properly assess the God of heaven. **Then, and only then, would he receive wisdom to once again administer his kingdom,** for that is what immediately follows.

I cannot imagine the exhilaration of Nebuchadnezzar at the return of his understanding. For one made in the image of God to be deprived of understanding is a most severe judgment. To receive it back again is a most wonderful mercy. No doubt the former demoniac of Gadera experienced similar

this text is better captured by some of the more free translations. *“I came to the honor and glory of my kingdom: and my shape returned to me,”*^{DARBY} and *“I came to the honor of my kingdom; and my natural form returned to me.”*^{Septuagint} In a sense, Nebuchadnezzar was reborn. The long hair like eagles' feathers, the nails that were like birds claws, and other beastly aspects of his person went away, and the majestic appearance he had as a king returned. Some of his beastly features were apparently developed over a long period, but they went away suddenly. **His new appearance, strictly speaking, was not the result of special grooming, but of special grace.** The same Divine hands that had wounded him, made him whole. As it is written, *“I wound and I heal”* (Deut 32:29).

This was in order to the restoration of the glory of his kingdom,

I CANNOT IMAGINE THE EXHILARATION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR AT THE RETURN OF HIS UNDERSTANDING. FOR ONE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD TO BE DEPRIVED OF UNDERSTANDING IS A MOST SEVERE JUDGMENT. TO RECEIVE IT BACK AGAIN IS A MOST WONDERFUL MERCY.

feelings of joy and freedom.

THE GLORY OF MY KINGDOM

“ . . . and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me . . .” Other versions read, *“And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom”*^{NASB} and *“my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom.”*^{NIV}

In my judgment, the real sense of

which had remained in tact during his exile by the decree of God. It would be uncomely for a majestic kingdom to be administered by one who appeared as a beast of the field. Therefore, because Nebuchadnezzar had learned the intended lesson, his comeliness was restored. He looked like a king!

MY COUNSELORS AND MY LORDS

“ . . . and my counselors and my lords sought unto me . . .” Other versions read, *“resorted to me,”*^{NKJV} *“began seeking me,”*^{NASB} and *“sought me out.”*^{NIV}

God Is Glorified by One of the Singular Judgments of an Individual In All of History, by Given O. Blakely

What a marvelous act of mercy is revealed in this verse. Ordinarily, deprived of their leader for seven years, politicians would consider themselves released from the cause of restraint. They might have formed some sort of conspiracy, and taken the kingdom for themselves, as Absalom was wont to do. But this did not happen. This is why the king's dream included a solemn decree to leave the stump and its roots, binding it with a band of iron and brass. Keeping the kingdom in tact involved subduing ambitious thoughts, and seeing to it that opportunists did not arise. All of this was the working of the Lord, who can turn men's hearts like a river of water (Prov 21:1).

Note, the king did not resort to the counselors and nobles to be caught up on the affairs of the kingdom. Rather, they sought him. Remember, the king was "driven from among men." Perhaps, beholding the madness of the king, some of these men did the driving. However, it appears to me that they had actually maintained the kingdom in keeping with Nebuchadnezzar's known desires. Now,

they return to him, showing their allegiance to him, and making themselves subject to him. All of this was of the Lord.

Surely a God who can do such things is worthy of our trust. He is able to so order our lives as to be a blessing. We do well to live by faith and walk in the Spirit. In Christ God is more kindly disposed toward men than He was, even to Nebuchadnezzar. Believe that!

ESTABLISHED IN MY KINGDOM

" . . . and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me." Other versions read, *"so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me,"*^{NASB} *"and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before,"*^{NIV} and *"I was reestablished over my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me."*^{NRSV}

Thus Nebuchadnezzar did not simply resume where he left off. **Now that He knew the Most High ruled in the kingdoms of men, his kingdom**

was enhanced, expanded, and obtained even more glory. The word of Bildad the Shuite was fulfilled in king Nebuchadnezzar: *"thy latter end should greatly increase."* He had the same experience as Job, *"So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning"* (Job 42:12). As with Israel, the Lord humbled the king *"that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end"* (Deu 8:16). The saying of Solomon, another king with whom God dealt, came to pass in the king of Babylon. *"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof"* (Eccl 7:8). This also is A Divine manner, and is to be duly noted by All believers.

We are not provided the details of Nebuchadnezzar's latter glory. In fact, with the exception of Daniel's words to Belshazzar in the next chapter, this is the last we hear of Nebuchadnezzar in all of the Bible. The purpose of his record is not to comment on the greatness of his kingdom, as men are wont to do. Rather, it is to reveal the greatness of God, who dealt so graciously with him.

HONORING THE LORD

" 37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and

has understanding, and sees the truth about the Lord. The theme of his speech has turned from himself to the One who made, chastened, and restored him.

You sense these are words pregnant with meaning. **Yet, their meanings are not within precisely defined borders, but seem to spill over into one another, like great streams of truth emptying themselves into one majestic ocean.** There is some redundancy in the words, but it is meaningful redundancy, and not vain repetition.

THIS IS THE LANGUAGE OF A PERSON WHO HAS SEEN THE LORD AS OVER ALL. SELF GLORY HAS BEEN SWALLOWED UP BY THE GLORY OF THE LORD, AND IN HIS DIVINE LIGHT LESSER LIGHTS ARE SEEN MORE CLEARLY (PSA 36:9). THE LORD IS THE THEME OF HIS TALK!

The word "praise" emphasis adoration – being captured, as it were, by the beauty of the Lord. "Extol" places the stress on exaltation – making the Lord known above all other things – even above His own works: lifting Him up, and bringing Him to the attention of men. "Honor" accentuates glorifying God, or declaring the aspects of His Person that He has revealed.

those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

The attention of Nebuchadnezzar has certainly been arrested! The last time we heard him speaking, he was boasting about what he thought he had done. But he is not doing that now – not now that he

PRAISE, EXTOL, AND HONOR

"Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor . . ." Other versions read *"praise, exalt, and honor,"*^{NASB} *"praise, exalt, and glorify,"*^{NIV} *"praise, magnify, and glorify,"*^{DOUAY} and *"worship, praise, and honor."*^{BBE}

This is the language of a person who has seen the Lord as over all. Self glory has been swallowed up by the glory

of the Lord, and in His Divine light lesser lights are seen more clearly (Psa 36:9). The Lord is the theme of his talk!

THE KING OF HEAVEN

“ . . . the King of heaven . . . ”

There is a King in heaven – one who rules in heaven, who is “*over all*.” He is Sovereign: that is, there is no place where His rule is not applicable, and no competitors that can question or nullify it. As you might suppose, a King in heaven is quite different from a king on earth, for “*the heavens do rule*” (Dan 4:26).

God is referred to as “*King*” numerous times in Scripture. David referred to Him as “*my King and my God*” (Psa 5:2). Four times He is called “*the King of glory*” (Psa 24:7,8,9,20). He sits “*forever*” as a “*King*” (Psa 29:10).

But this is not David, the “*sweet Psalmist of Israel*” speaking. This is not one of the holy prophets, speaking to the people of God. This is a king of Babylon, a heathen, who has spent seven years under the rod of God. There is not the slightest ambiguity in his words. He does not stammer, stutter, or speak haltingly. He seems to speak with more authority concerning the Living God than many who wear the very name of Jesus. Hear what he has to say! He has been taught by God, and God can teach you more in Jesus than He ever taught Nebuchadnezzar.

WHOSE WORKS ARE TRUTH

“ . . . all whose works are truth . . . ”

Other versions read, “*all His works are true*,”^{NASB} “*everything He does is right*,”^{NIV} and “*all His works are right*.”^{RSV} **Nothing God does is inconsiderate, unfair, unjust, or without proper reason.** He never acts out of caprice, or with improper motives. His anger does not flash out uncontrollably, and His mercy is always extended thoughtfully and with sound purpose. To question God, therefore, is a sin of the greatest magnitude. It is the opposite of extolling God, and the antithesis of praising Him. The psychiatrists may tell men they are doing the natural thing when they are upset with God, or question what He is doing. But that is not the truth. Such responses are actually murmurings, like those of the children of Israel. Preachers and teachers should remind the people “*Neither murmur ye, as some of them*

also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer” (1 Cor 10:10).

Keep in mind, this a man who has just spent seven years in the open field with wild beasts. He has eaten grass for that entire period, during which his hair grew long like an eagles’ feathers, and his nails became long and sharp like the claws of a bird. He had been deprived of his mind, his kingdom, and his comely appearance. See how he speaks when he is of sound mind! **He says what God has done is right.** No doubt he will be called to the witness stand in the day of judgment to condemn those who had so much more than he, yet still did not come to the right conclusion about God.

HIS WAYS ARE JUDGMENT

“ . . . and His ways judgment . . . ”

Other versions read, “*His ways justice*,”

He comprehended God Himself. You may recall that God showed Moses His glory. He caused “*all*” of His goodness to pass before Moses, and expounded His glorious Person to His servant (Ex 33:18-19; 34:5-7).

The wonder of our text is that something of God’s ways and works had been revealed to Nebuchadnezzar – a heathen – **and Nebuchadnezzar had not asked for such a revelation.** What person, therefore, could possibly come to the conclusion that God cannot be more fully known by those who have believed the record He has given of His Son?

THOSE WHO WALK IN PRIDE

“ . . . and those that walk in pride . . . ”

Walking in pride is living with an inflated notion of self. It is conducting one’s life as though there was no God, no Divine will, no appointed purpose for human life.

YOU SEE HOW UTTERLY FOOLISH IT IS TO “WALK IN PRIDE.” IF SUCH A WALK IS OUT OF ORDER FOR A KING GOD CALLED A “HEAD OF GOLD,” THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS OF ALL WORLDLY RULERS, HOW MUCH MORE IS IT COMPLETELY WRONG FOR ANY OF US!

^{NKJV} “*His ways just*,”^{NASB} “*all His ways are just*,”^{NIV} and “*all His ways are right*.”^{NJB}

This is not a mere repetition of the previous thought. His WORKS are **true**, His WAYS are **just!** This is almost exactly what Moses said: “*His work is perfect, for His ways are judgment*” (Deut 32:4). There is a difference between the **works** of God and the **ways** of God. His works are WHAT He does, His ways are WHY He does them. The closer a person is to the Lord, the more he can learn of His ways. The more we know of His ways, the more sense we make of His works. His ways are the foundation of His works.

The Psalmist expressed it beautifully. “*He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel*” (Psa 103:7). Israel saw WHAT the Lord did. Moses understood WHY He did it. This is precisely why Moses could effectively intercede for Israel. He knew God’s ways. That is another way of saying

From the heavenly perspective, pride is the epitome of ignorance. Man was made by God, and everything he possesses was obtained from God.

In spite of the fact that all men live in God’s world, with the resounding testimony of God’s eternal power and Godhead sounding in their ears, “*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Rom 3:23). The devil has “*deceived the whole world*” (Rev 12:9), and all are “*by nature children of wrath*” (Eph 2:1-3). The **ONLY** people who are no longer in this category are those who have been delivered, or saved, by Jesus. **He** is the One who defeated their enemy. **He** is the One who reconciled them to God. **God** is the One who put them in Jesus, and washed them from their sins. What possible reason can be adduced for “*walking in pride?*”

You see how utterly foolish it is to “*walk in pride*.” If such a walk is out of order for a king God called a “*head of*

gold," the most illustrious of all worldly rulers, how much more is it completely wrong for any of us!

HE IS ABLE TO ABASE

“ . . . He is able to abase.” And what will God do with those who “walk in pride,” whose heads are lifted higher than they ought to be? Eventually, all of them will be “abased,” “humbled,”^{NIV} or “brought low.”^{NRSV} The universal humbling will take place when the Lord Jesus appears in all of His glory. There will certainly be no boasting then.

In the meantime, God is fully able to “abase” the prideful one at a time – just like He did Nebuchadnezzar. At one time,

grass with wild beasts. God KNOWS how to “abase” those who “walk in pride.”

He can tailor the abasement so it will yield good knowledge to the one who once walked in pride. Then, he can move that humbled person to declare how he was humbled to the entire world through a proclamation that **will** be read. The Lord knows HOW to abase those who walk in pride.

And, He is ABLE to accomplish this abasement. He does not have to ask permission to do it, appeal to a human council, or have the consent of the one He will abase. Men may boast of their free will, free moral agency, volitional

most remarkable.

- ▣ “The Most High.”
- ▣ “Him that liveth for ever.”
- ▣ “Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion.”
- ▣ “His kingdom is from generation to generation.”
- ▣ “He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven.”
- ▣ “He doeth according to His will among the inhabitants of earth.”
- ▣ “None can stay His hand.”
- ▣ “None can say unto Him, What doest Thou?”
- ▣ “The King of heaven.”
- ▣ “Whose works are truth.”
- ▣ “Whose ways are judgment.”
- ▣ “Those who walk in pride He is able to abase.”

AND, HE IS ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS ABASEMENT. HE DOES NOT HAVE TO ASK PERMISSION TO DO IT, APPEAL TO A HUMAN COUNCIL, OR HAVE THE CONSENT OF THE ONE HE WILL ABASE. MEN MAY BOAST OF THEIR FREE WILL, FREE MORAL AGENCY, VOLITIONAL FREEDOM, AND THE LIKES. BUT WHEN GOD SETS OUT TO ABASE SOMEONE, OF WHAT VALUE IS ALL OF THAT SUPPOSED FREEDOM? WHERE IS THE RIGHT OF CHOICE THEN?

I suppose, Nebuchadnezzar could not conceive of this being possible. After all, he was the king of all the world. Massive armies and other resources were at his command. He appeared secure enough, having been in his position for more than four decades. That would be like being the President of the United States for ten full terms. Yet, in a solitary hour, that very king was brought low! He descended from the height of the throne of Babylon to the open fields, naked, and at the mercy of the elements. In a single hour he went from feasting on Babylonian dainties to eating

freedom, and the likes. But when God sets out to abase someone, of what value is all of that supposed freedom? Where is the right of choice then? See, God **is** ABLE to bring low those who walk in pride.

A FINAL OBSERVATION

As you read this text, you get a keen sense of Nebuchadnezzar’s acute consciousness of God. In a few moments he has gone from concentrating on grass to contemplating God! In the expressions following the return of his understanding (vs 34-37), his references to the Lord are

Is it possible that this Babylonian king learned more about the Living God than you? You are not living in the blazing glory of the exalted Son of God. He is the “Sun of righteousness,” who has risen “with healing in His wings” (Mal 4:2). He has come as the Divinely appointed Expositor of God Himself. He comes to show us the Father, and to take us to Him as well. How do you suppose it will be for those on the day of judgment who lived and died with less of an understanding of God than Nebuchadnezzar of old – even though they lived during great illumination?

CONCLUSION

You must remember that this account, like all Scriptural accounts, was “written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” (1 Cor 10:11). It has been “written for our learning, that we through patience and

comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom 15:4). Like all of Scripture, it is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16-17). Consider the treasures of wisdom and knowledge

that have been opened in this fourth chapter of Daniel.

- ▣ God works powerfully toward individuals (4:3).
- ▣ His signs are great (4:3a).

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ His wonders are mighty (4:3b).▶ His kingdom is everlasting (4:3c).▶ His dominion is from generation to generation (4:3d).▶ He can arrest the attention of a person on his bed (4:5).▶ He can confirm the absolute poverty of worldly wisdom (4:7).▶ He can confirm the superiority of heavenly wisdom (4:8).▶ He can move a king to precisely know the dream He gave to him (4:10-17).▶ He can dry up human wisdom, so that the meaning of God's message must be derived from another (4:18-19).▶ God sees the details of pride (4:20-23).▶ He can instantly remove one from people, isolating him (4:25). | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ He can deprive men of understanding (4:16, 25).▶ Flesh forgets what God has revealed (4:29-30).▶ God does not forget what He has declared (4:31).▶ The Lord can instantly move a person from the peak of power to the depths of depravity (4:33).▶ He can make a person more like the beasts of the earth than like men (4:33).▶ He can restore lost years, and recover those He has abased (4:34-37).▶ As compared with the King of heaven, all humanity put together is nothing (4:35a).▶ God does according to His will in the | <ul style="list-style-type: none">army of heaven (4:35b).▶ God does according to His will among the inhabitants of the earth (4:35c).▶ No one can hold back the hand of God (4:35d).▶ No one can question what God does (4:35e).▶ All of God works are done in truth (4:37a).▶ All of God's ways are just and right (4:37b).▶ God is able to abase those who walk in pride (4:37c). <p>And to think, God so moved the King of Babylon that he proclaimed this throughout the entire world! Perhaps the Gentile world is not really innocent!</p> |
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Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 8/09/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, reviewing verses 1-30 of the fifth chapter. The lesson is titled, **"BELSHAZZAR IS BROUGHT DOWN BECAUSE HE DID NOT LEARN."** Nebuchadnezzar passes from the Divine scene, and we are introduced to Belshazzar. In a single chapter we see him as a king, struck speechless and filled with fear by a Divine work, and slain, with his kingdom passing to Darius the Mede. This is the famous "handwriting on the wall" incident. 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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COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>