

Atlantic Lyman conf.1972-02 Studies in Daniel

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by Joseph Balsan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being born again to understand the things of God and interpret the Word of God, using the example of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and experience.

Duration: 56:31

Scripture: Daniel 4:18, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 12:19-20

Topics: "God's Sovereignty", "Humility Before God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of King Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that he couldn't interpret, so he called upon Daniel for help. The preacher emphasizes the dangers of pride and materialism, using the example of a man who boasted about his wealth but was suddenly struck down by God. The sermon also warns about the influence of drugs and the decline of moral values in society. Ultimately, the preacher highlights the importance of recognizing God's sovereignty and humbling oneself before Him.

Transcript

It's Thursday and Friday nights. No meeting Saturday night. We'll give you a chance to rest up and then we'll go again next week, Sunday through Friday.

And of course, you know, the Lord always keeps the best things for the last. And so, the last week will be the best, I'm sure. But all things of God are good, aren't they? Let us turn to Daniel chapter 4. Daniel, the book of Daniel chapter 4. Daniel 4 and we'll break in at verse 18.

Daniel 4 verse 18. This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now thou, O Belshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof.

For as much as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation, but thou art able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee. Then Daniel, whose name was Belshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake and said, Belshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation thereof trouble thee.

Belshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies. The tree that thou sawest, which grew and was strong, whose height reached

unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth, whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much. And in it was meat for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation.

It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong, for thy greatness is grown and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down and destroy it, yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let its portion be with the beast of the field, till seven times pass over him. This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king, that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beast of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

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. Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility. All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. 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 honor of my majesty? 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, and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beast 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. 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.

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 forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. 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? 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. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are true, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

Those that walk in pride he is able to abase. Shall we look to the Lord in prayer? Our Father, we desire to thank thee tonight for thy word. We thank thee for this revelation that thou hast given to us, and above all for him of whom it speaks, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And we thank thee for all who are in this service tonight, and we pray that thou will graciously give help in speaking thy word, that it may be a blessing to each one. And if there are those in this meeting tonight

who, like Nebuchadnezzar, are lifted up with pride because of themselves or because of what they have done, we pray that thy Holy Spirit will show them their need, that they might humble themselves and experience the exalting and salvation of God. We ask thy blessing and thy help, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Amen. Now, for the sake of those who are here for the first time, this chart that you notice behind me is an outline of the book of Daniel the prophet, and we have been noticing that Daniel the prophet brings before us prophecies concerning the times of the Gentiles. In other words, the times of world rule of the Gentiles.

We who know something about the Bible, we know that most of the Old Testament is about the people of Israel, the Jewish people. And we know that they were the people that God selected, and we know that they were the people that God exalted in the days of David and in the days of Solomon over all nations. But we know that also because of their sin and because of their disobedience and breaking God's commandments, why God gave them over into the hands of Gentile powers.

And from the time that the throne was given from the nation of Israel to Gentile world powers, why we have had a reign of Gentile world powers. Now, by Gentile world powers, of course, we mean all nations or any nations who are not Jewish or who are not Israelite. And so we have had brought before us how Daniel, as a young man, was carried captive into the land of Babylon.

And while he was captive in the land of Babylon, why God was speaking. And God spoke to the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, and he gave him a dream that he was not able to remember, and that his wise men and astrologers could not remember. And so Daniel was brought into his presence, and Daniel, after seeking help from God, God gave him the dream, and he also gave him the interpretation.

And the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had was that he saw a great figure, a huge figure, bright and very powerful. And that figure, the head of it was of gold, the breast and the arms of it were of silver, the thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet were a mixture of iron and clay. And the ten toes were a mixture of iron and clay.

And then he saw a great stone fall from heaven, and this stone smote the image on the ten toes and on the feet, and it smashed and destroyed that image, grinding it to powder. The wind came along and swept away all of the remnants of that image, and then that stone grew and grew until it became a great mountain and it filled the whole earth. And Daniel, in interpreting that dream, told Nebuchadnezzar that he and his Babylonian empire were pictured in the head of gold, and that after him would arise another empire, which would be inferior, and that would be the Medo-Persian empire.

We saw that in the fifth chapter, the end of the chapter, and we're going to look at that tomorrow night in more detail. And then there would be a third empire, which would follow after that, and that of course was the Grecian empire. And then there would be a fourth empire, which would be exceedingly strong, and like iron it would break in pieces.

And of course that was the Roman empire, under which our Lord Jesus Christ was born, and under which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. And then in the last days of that empire, in the days of ten kings, why there would be a stone fall from heaven, and God himself would bring in a kingdom which would destroy this Gentile dominion, and that stone would fill the whole earth. And Daniel said that God himself would establish a kingdom which would never be destroyed, a kingdom which would fill the whole earth.

And so of course, we have brought before us how hundreds of years before, the second, third, and fourth, or hundreds of years before these third and fourth kingdoms came into being, why Daniel had foretold by the power of God what was coming to pass. And so of course, this stone cut from the mountain and falling on the feet of the image is a picture to us of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And you and I are living in days today when in western Europe, where at one time the Roman power existed as well as in Asia Minor, the ten, the common market is gradually merging into ten nations, and who knows, it may be the preparation for this ten kingdom empire that is coming into existence after this present age in which we live, because this, you notice here we have a parenthesis.

Now this of course is something that Daniel did not see in his vision, or he did not, Nebuchadnezzar did not see in his dream, and of course Daniel made no mention of, but the New Testament tells us that when our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, why God as it were stopped the clock of prophecy, and God began a special work which he is accomplishing at this present time in which he is forming a church. And when this age ends by the rapture of the church, the taking out of this world, those who belong to the Lord Jesus, why God begins to deal again with the Gentile nations, as we have it here, there will be that ten kingdom empire, and we're going to see something of the characteristics of it. And when Nebuchadnezzar of course heard the dream and the interpretation, why he made the wonderful testimony or confession that your God is the God of gods, he is the Lord of kings, and he is the revealer of secrets.

But though he made that great confession, why his heart was untouched. And yet last night we were looking at how he made that great image of gold, and then he demanded that all should worship, and those who would not worship would be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And three Israelites, three Jewish lads, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they stood for God, refused to bow to the image, and the result was that they were taken and cast into the burning fiery furnace, but instead of being consumed, why Nebuchadnezzar saw that there was one with them, like unto the Son of God, and that the bonds with which they were bound, they were loose.

And so Nebuchadnezzar called out the three young men, and he made the wonderful confession or testimony that every people, nation, and language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill, because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort, and the king promoted those three young men in his province. And we saw how that pictures for us that in the time of the end, the political head of this ten combined nation, we could call it the United States of Europe, the head of this nation will, the head of this kingdom or empire will set up an image, and all must bow to it. All must receive the mark of the beast in the right hand or in their forehead, because if they don't, they won't be able to buy or sell.

And we saw how the Bible brings before us there is going to be a Jewish believers in that time of tribulation who will refuse to bow, and they will be put into an awful time of trouble, but they will be preserved, and they will be delivered, because God has brought the Jewish people into the land of Palestine, and the stage is being set today for the time of the end. All that hinders is that the Lord has to take out of this world those who are his people, those who are Christians, those who have been born again, and who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Now we saw that in the second chapter of Daniel, and in the third chapter of Daniel, that this man Nebuchadnezzar had seen and learned some wonderful things.

He had seen how his wise men were not able to recall the dream that he had, but Daniel was, and Daniel interpreted to him. He had seen this fiery furnace, and he had seen these three young men cast into it, and he had seen how the Son of God was with them, and yet they were not consumed. And you might

think to yourself that a man who had such experiences, he would surely have turned to the Lord.

But you know friends, we can see miraculous things, and we can hear miraculous things, and they don't speak to us. They don't have any impression upon us. And so here in the fourth chapter of Daniel, we have how this man Nebuchadnezzar is giving a testimony.

You notice here it says here, in the first verse, I didn't read it because we're going to read it as we go down, he says, Nebuchadnezzar the king unto all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. Now I want you to notice that here is something he's talking about a personal experience that he has had with the Lord.

Something outside of these miracles that he had seen, something outside of this dream that he had seen, here was something that he was going to recite for us. He was going to give us a test. He's going to give us a testimony about a personal experience that he had with the Lord himself.

He says, the high God, I want to tell you about the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. I just wonder tonight, if every one of us here have a personal testimony of what the Lord has done, not for my husband, or not for my wife, or not for my neighbor, or not for my friend, but what the Lord has done for me. What the Lord has done for me.

You know, after all, friends, this is where salvation is. This is where our personal relationship with God is. This must be something that we must have for ourselves.

We eat for ourselves. We drink for ourselves. Nobody can do those things for us.

There are certain things we have to do for ourselves, and there is an experience with God that we have to have for ourselves. Now here this heathen king is talking about a personal experience that he had. In the fourth verse, he says, I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in mine house and flourishing in my palace.

Now just think of that. I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in mine house. Here he was, the king, over the whole world.

He had conquered everybody they'd come in contact with. His riches were immense. His wealth was tremendous.

Why, my friends, he had built Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the world, and here he was at rest in his palace, and he said he was flourishing in his palace. But how sad, he didn't know the Lord. And yet how true this is of many.

They have a peace, you might say, and they're prospering. There's something like the man who was walking down the street. I give out this tract once in a while, and he was handed a gospel tract, and he was there.

He asked, well, what's this about? Well, this will tell you how you can get to heaven. Well, the man says, well, Iowa is good enough for me. Iowa is good enough for me.

He was at rest, and he was flourishing. And there are many today just like that. Why, yes, I'm all right.

Why? I raised my family. I try to do the best I can. I belong to the church.

I've been baptized. I do all kinds of good that I possibly can. Why, I'm all right.

But have you ever been born again? You know, the Lord Jesus said, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. But something happened to wake this man up. You know what? He says, I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

God spoke to that man. God spoke to that man in a dream. And this dream, my friend, was so powerful, and this dream spoke to him with such tremendous force that he said he was afraid and he was troubled.

He was afraid and he was troubled. I wonder, my friend, have you and I ever had that experience? I can look back to a time in my life when I was afraid. I was afraid to die.

I was afraid to stand before God. I was troubled. You know why I was troubled? I was troubled because of my sins.

I knew that I had sins, and I knew that I couldn't stand before God in my sins. And so I was afraid. I was afraid to die.

I was afraid to stand before God. I was troubled because of my sins. When this man saw this dream, why, he was afraid, and he became troubled.

And so it tells us, he called together his wise men, all the wise men in Babylon. And when they came into his presence, why, my friends, he told them his dream. But I want you to notice, it says in the seventh verse, I told the dream before them, but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

You know, these wise men weren't able to tell Nebuchadnezzar what he had dreamed. And he says, well, if you don't tell us what you dreamed, how can we tell you the interpretation? But now, Nebuchadnezzar tells them his dream, and they're still not able to tell him the interpretation. They were wise men.

They were learned in all the wisdom of Babylon. They were astrologers. They had all their special sciences.

But my friends, when it came to unraveling something that came from God, they were helpless to do it. And I'd like to speak to the young people here especially. You know, young people seem to think that because a professor is a good professor in history, or because he's a good professor in mathematics, or he's a good professor in science, they think that because of that, if he says anything about the Bible, he must be right about that too.

Well, don't make that mistake. A man may be very smart in the world, but he may be very much in the dark when it comes to the things of God. Because in order to understand the things of God, a man has to be born again.

I don't care how much learning a man has, how much he's gone to school. There are people today that say, well, my minister should know it. After all, my minister has his degree.

He's gone through college. Now, I was born a Roman Catholic until the Lord converted me. But I remember when the priest came to see me, or came to see us after I was saved, and to make a long story very short, he said to me, you know, I have studied 22 years to be a priest.

He said, I went eight years to grammar school, I went four years to high school, I went four years to college, and I went six years to seminary in order to be able to be religious and teach people religion. And I turned him to one verse in the Bible. I turned him to 11, Matthew 11, and verse 28, where the Lord Jesus says, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Ah, friends, unless a person is born again, he cannot understand the things of God. Unless a person is born again, he can't interpret the Word of God. He may have all kinds of degrees.

He may have graduated from the seminary. But if he has not been born again, Jesus said, except a man be born again, he cannot see, he cannot understand, he cannot discern the kingdom of God. These wise men, they were helpless.

They couldn't interpret the dream. Daniel told, or Nebuchadnezzar told them the dream, but they couldn't interpret it. And so he called in Daniel.

And he says, O Daniel, I know that secrets are with you. I know that you have the spirit of the holy gods in you, and that there's nothing that you cannot reveal. You tell me, Daniel says.

And so he says, I saw in my dream, I saw a tree. And this tree was a huge tree. It was so great that it reached unto heaven.

And he says, the birds of the air, the birds of the air were in it. He says, everything on earth was fed from that tree. People, things found shelter under it.

And then he says, those holy ones above, they looked down upon, they said, cut it down, cut it down. And he says the tree was cut down, but it was not entirely cut down. It was cut down.

And then there was a band left about it. And he says, nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a man's beast's heart be given unto him, and let seven times pass over him.

In other words, that tree was to be given the heart of a beast. And then it was to eat grass like an ox, and seven times were to pass over it, until he learned that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. And Nebuchadnezzar says, now this is my dream.

This is my dream, Balthasar. What does this dream mean? And Daniel, the Bible says, stoned for one hour. In other words, Daniel was so astonished at the dream that he had heard, for a whole hour he didn't utter a word.

And Nebuchadnezzar says, now Daniel, don't let it trouble you. Don't let it frighten you. Tell me what the interpretation of the dream is.

Daniel says, O King, the dream may it be to your enemies, and may this dream be fulfilled in the lives of those who hate you. Well, what is it, Daniel? Well, that tree, O King, whose top reaches to heaven, whose branches are so broad that everything finds provision and shelter under it? King, that's you. You're that person.

You're the monarch. You're the one who rules over the whole world. You're the one upon whom everything is dependent.

You are the one that everyone looks to. King, you are that tree. And you know the holy watchers.

And you know, friends, this is very remarkable because if you read the 17th verse, it says, This matter is by the decree of the watchers and the demand by the word of the holy ones. Now, you know what this tells us, friends? This tells us that there is a court of angelic beings in heaven who are observing men and that this court of angelic beings passes sentence upon individuals or upon nations. Oh, you say, well, now you're dreaming.

You're a little far-fetched, aren't you? Well, let's have an example of it. Let's turn to 1 Kings chapter 22 for a moment. And we'll notice this court in existence in heaven, in the heavenly places.

And we'll see this court in operation in the life of another king, a king of Israel by the name of Ahab. And he was going to war until he wanted counsel. And a prophet, Micaiah, came and told him what happened.

Notice in the 18th verse of 1 Kings 22, it says, The king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? Now, you know, this man Micaiah had come and told Ahab, Ahab, you're going into battle. And Ahab, you're going to lose. And Ahab, you're going to die.

And Ahab didn't like that. He said, this man is always telling me things that make me unhappy. I don't like him because he doesn't treat me right.

And then Micaiah says, I'll tell you how it came about, Ahab. He said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord, verse 19, I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the hosts of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.

And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. Now, all of Ahab's prophets had said, you go ahead.

All of his preachers, you know, all of his preachers, they told Ahab, Ahab, you go ahead. You're all right. You'll win, Ahab.

You'll win the victory, Ahab. One man, Micaiah, a prophet of the Lord, he says, Ahab, you're going to meet your downfall. You're going to die.

You're going to lose the battle. Well, here the Lord gives us the reason. The Lord gives us the secret.

And this spirit comes forth. And he says, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.

And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also. Go forth, and do so. Now, therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.

And so here, my friends, we have a picture of the court of heaven. And the court of heaven looked down upon Nebuchadnezzar. And they said, Nebuchadnezzar is so filled with pride.

Nebuchadnezzar has to be cut down. Nebuchadnezzar has to be taught a lesson. Nebuchadnezzar has to be humble.

His pride. But he says, It won't be forever. It will be only for seven times.

It will be only for about seven years. And when those seven years pass over, you recognize that the most high rules in the kingdoms of men, and that he gives it to whomsoever he will, your kingdom will be restored to you. That's why the band is put around the tree that is left.

Well, when Belshazzar, when Daniel gives him the interpretation, in the 27th verse he says, Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility. Daniel says, King, break off your sins. Turn to God in righteousness.

Show mercy to the poor, and it may be you'll be spared from this awful fate. But you know, friends, Nebuchadnezzar didn't listen. Nebuchadnezzar saw the dream.

He saw the interpretation of the dream. But I want you to notice, it says in the 28th verse, All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of 12 months, he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

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 honor of my majesty? As he walked through his beautiful palace, and as he saw all the splendor around him, he said, Is this not what I have built? He says, Didn't I build this by my power? He says, Didn't I build this for my majesty and my glory? My, oh my, what a memorial! This is to my ability, my power. And my friends, just then the voice came from heaven, cut him down. Nebuchadnezzar cut him down, and Nebuchadnezzar's mind was gone.

And Nebuchadnezzar became like a beast. He was driven out from his palace. He was driven out from amongst men.

And seven long years, until his hair, his hair was as long as eagle's feathers. His nails were like eagle's claws. For seven whole years, that mighty monarch was like a beast of the earth.

He never lifted up his eyes. All he could do was look down. Why? Because of pride.

You know, my friends, pride is the sin that's going to doom and damn people for eternity. Pride. You know what keeps people from coming to Christ? Pride.

You mean to say I have to come as a sinner? You mean to say I have to take my place as a sinner? There are altogether too many like that man that we read about in the 18th chapter of Luke. You remember he went into the temple, and he stood the Bible says, and he prayed thus with himself, Oh God, I thank Thee that I am not like other men. I fast twice a week.

I give tithes of all that I possess. He says, I'm not immoral. I'm not even like this poor publican there.

Oh God, I thank Thee that I'm better than other men. I thank Thee that I'm not like other men. And the Bible says that the other man would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but he smote upon his breast, and he says, God be merciful to me the sinner.

God be to me just the way that you are when you look upon that sacrifice which is laid upon the altar. You be toward me just as you are when you look at that sacrifice. And how does God, how is God toward the individual when he looks at the sacrifice? Offer let me ask you tonight, what is your hope for heaven? Is it yourself? Do you say like that man, I go to church, I give tithes of all that I possess.

I'm no extortioner. I'm no adulterer. I don't commit some of the terrible sins that other people commit.

Why, I'm not even like some of the people around me. I am better than they are. God says, I have no room for that.

God says, that's fine. It's the person who says, God be merciful to me, the sinner. That's the person that finds mercy.

When a person takes his place as a sinner, you know before I was saved, I used to think that it was good people that God saved, and that you had to try to make yourself good in order to go to heaven. Friends, it's not good people because the Bible says there is none good. No, not one.

There is none good. No, not one. All we like sheep have gone astray.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That's why the Lord Jesus has to die. That's why the Lord Jesus had to bear that burden of sin on Calvary, because you and I couldn't save ourselves.

Ah, friend, cry. You know, as I read this, how this king says, is not this the great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty? 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. You know, I couldn't help thinking about an incident that our Lord Jesus told in the 12th chapter of Luke about that wealthy farmer, you know, why his land was bringing forth bountifully his barns couldn't keep everything.

And so he sat down and he thought to himself, I'm going to pull down my barns and I'm going to build bigger barns. And he says, I'm going to fill those barns with my goods. And then I'm going to say to my soul, soul, thou has much goods laid up for many years, take thy these and eat and be merry.

And it says that night, God said, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall these things be? That night, God spoke from heaven and said, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall these things be? Ah, friends, you know, boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. God cut that man down. Here, a man lost his mind for seven years.

He was like a beast. He lived like a beast, an outcast. And then I want you to notice the 34th verse.

It says, At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven. The very moment he looked up. You know the difference between a man and a beast? A man can look up.

The beast always has his eyes and his head toward the ground. The Bible says in Psalm 49, Man that is in honor and understandeth not is like the beast that perish. There are men and women today who are living like animals.

Oh yes, you say, I know such people. I'm not talking about that. A beast is a creature who only looks down.

And that's the way it is with some people. All they think about is hogs and farms and stocks and barns and the world condition. And they never look up and they don't think about God.

They don't think about eternity. They don't think about where they're going to be. They're like the beast.

They're looking down. But the moment Nebuchadnezzar looked up, it says, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven. And then he says, the moment I did, mine understanding returned to me.

The moment I looked up, that very moment my understanding returned to me. And you know the very moment a man or a woman looks up, the very moment a man or a woman looks to Christ, that very moment that person's understanding comes. Yes, they know.

The darkness is gone. They know where they're going. They know what their end is going to be.

They know their sin's forgiven. They know they're on their way to heaven. And then notice the third thing.

He says, I blessed the Most High. I thanked Him. I gave thanks to Him.

I blessed the Most High and I praised and honored Him that lived forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion and His kingdom is from generation to generation. My friend, the very moment a sinner turns to Christ, that very moment that sinner turns to Christ, his eyes are opened. The darkness has passed.

He knows it's well with his soul. But what does this picture for us as to the time of the end? Because my friends, what we see in actually historically happened in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, it's a picture to us also of what is going to happen in the time of the end. Nebuchadnezzar, that great monarch, because of his pride, became a beast.

What characterizes our nation today? Pride. Oh, you know, we're a great nation. We've got wealth.

We've got tremendous intellectual power. We've got tremendous military power. But with this, what is happening? You know what's happening? God is being pushed out.

God is being relegated to the background. And what is the result? Well, the result, the Bible tells us, when the church is taken out, the Gentile nations which are increasingly turning away from God today. We don't want God.

Oh yes, whenever we call, we want him to come and help us. But what he says, we don't want to listen to what he says. He has no authority.

He has no power. But you know what's going to happen? The Bible tells us that when the church is taken away from this world by the coming of Christ, the Gentile nations which are forsaken of God are going to become like the beast. What does it mean? They've got no thought of God.

And like the beast, they're going to bring in practices and things that are going to be to the grief and to the sorrow of many. Just as seven times, seven years passed over, Nebuchadnezzar, we know that this period of the tribulation is going to be a period of seven years. We'll speak about that when we come to the ninth chapter of Daniel, where we have the prophecy of the 70 weeks.

And the Bible tells us, if we turn to Revelation 19, and if we turn to other portions of the Bible, that the nations of the world are going to be in such turmoil and violence and corruption. And my friends, I think that all this dope and drug traffic that is increasing. The latest issue in Omaha today, while we were in an office, I was reading the latest, one of the latest issues of U.S. News and World Report.

And right on the front cover of it, they had that the drug traffic in the United States is today becoming of epidemic proportions. What does it tell us? It tells us, my friends, that the minds of men, the minds of young people, and the minds of elders as well, given over to this drugs, are incapable of thinking straight, are incapable of distinguishing between what is right and what is wrong, what is of God and what is not of God. And given over, after the Lord Jesus takes his people to be with him, given over to the delusion that the Bible tells us is going to come with the Antichrist, men are going to sink to depths that are lower than even the depths of the heathen who never heard the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you doubt it, read the first chapter of Romans and compare it with the fourth chapter of 1 Timothy and the third chapter of 2 Timothy and see if the same characteristics are not evident. In these portions, in Romans 1, we have the depths of degradation from which the heathen were lifted by means of the gospel. And in 1 Timothy 4 and 2 Timothy 3, you have a society that has heard the gospel and has rejected it and has sunk to such moral depravity and depths that their condition is as low or lower even than the condition of the heathen who never heard the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

But you know, friends, though the nations are going to sink to those depths where they have heard the gospel, just as there was part of that tree left and the kingdom was restored, the Bible does tell us that there are going to be nations that are going to be saved in that tribulation period and nations that are going to be brought into the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't have time to look at that, but if you want to find out who they are, you'll read about it in Revelation chapter 7 from verse 9 to the end, and you'll read about it in Matthew chapter 25 from verse 31 to 46, and you'll read about it in Isaiah 60, and you'll read about it in Isaiah 66. So here in this prophetic book of Daniel, we have how this mighty monarch, Nebuchadnezzar, you know, it's a wonderful thing to think that, my friends, that this first Gentile monarch had a personal experience with the Lord that changed his entire thinking and that changed his entire life and transformed him into one who believed in, who worshiped, and who testified of what the Lord had done for him and what the Lord was to him.

I wonder tonight, do you have a testimony? Has the Lord done anything for you? Has he saved you? Are you able to say tonight, I know, I know, I know it's well with my soul. I know Christ died for me. I know if I was to leave this world tonight, for me, it would be to be with Christ, which is far than you.

Do you know? Have you had that experience? If you haven't, you can have it tonight. Shall we pray? Our Father, we desire to thank thee tonight for thy precious word. We thank thee that thou didst work in the lives of men and women, not only in the lives of those who are rulers like Nebuchadnezzar, but we thank thee that thou didst work in the lives of individuals, common people like ourselves, from the various walks of life.

We realize, our God, that thou hast given us thy word to tell us of thy great purposes and also to tell us of thy great provision for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank thee that he came into the world to save sinners. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all expectation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

He himself said, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And we thank you that whosoever will, like that publican of old, take his place as a sinner and humble himself and receive Christ as Savior, such will experience thy salvation. Father, we pray that thou will bless thy word to each one.

We pray that we may not be only hearers of thy word, but that it may speak to our hearts and arouse us to the seriousness and the responsibility that is ours to respond to thy word. We ask thy blessing now and separate us with thy blessing in the Savior's name. Amen.

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