

*Prayer:*

**Slide # 1**

***Theme: God is Sovereign over History***

***Outline:***

- A. The personal history of the prophet Daniel – chapter 1
- B. The prophetic history of the Gentiles – chapters 2-7**
- C. The prophetic history of Israel – chapters 8-12

In 605 BC, Babylon began its takeover of the Jews with its first siege against Jerusalem. Four notable young Jewish boys were taken captive; namely Daniel and his three friends. They were young men of no compromise as seen in Daniel 1. The Babylonians sought to “Babylonize” them in terms of the culture, including giving them idolatrous Babylonian names. They were standouts in terms of knowledge and skill and therefore were schooled to serve in the king’s court (Dan. 1:19). But of the four Daniel is specifically said to have ***“had understanding in all visions and dreams”*** (Dan. 1:17).

That sets the table for the contents found in the rest of the book.

Shortly into his reign (the 2<sup>nd</sup> year) Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream. None of his wise men could tell him the dream, but then God revealed it to Daniel who made known its meaning to the king. This demonstrated to the king that indeed Daniel’s God was ***“the God of gods”*** (Dan. 2:47). It showed God uniquely to be a revealer of secrets. This highlights God’s omniscience.

Fast forward to sometime later (perhaps 20 years) and Nebuchadnezzar had a huge 90-foot-high golden image constructed. He called all the leaders in his empire together and commanded that they worship the image or be thrown into a burning fiery furnace. Everyone complied with the exception of the three Jewish young men named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Out of conviction and commitment to their God they refused. They were promptly thrown into the fire, but lo and behold they didn’t die but rather were seen walking around in the fire. And strangely there was a FOURTH man in the fire with them who had a supernatural appearance.

God has been slowly working on Nebuchadnezzar. First, he showed him that He is all knowing on a level beyond any other supposed god as seen in chapter 2. Then in chapter 3, He showed that He is all powerful beyond that of any other supposed God, as witnessed in saving the 3 Hebrew children through the fire.

That brings us to Daniel 4. Without being dogmatic, there are hints in the text that it was now getting towards the end of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. He ruled over Babylon from 605 to 562 BC for a period of 43 years. Many think the events of chapter 4 took place about 30 to 35 years or so into his reign. This would have made Daniel about 50 years old.

In the story of Daniel 4, King Nebuchadnezzar had another troublesome dream, which really served as a warning and a call to repentance. But one year later, he paid no attention and, in pride, boasted of being a self-made man. This was followed by a 7-year period of insanity where he was in the role of an animal living out in the field. He was then restored for a short time (perhaps a couple of years or so) before he died.

### **Slide # 2**

Dan. 2 – God is LORD over knowing the unknown (Revealer of secrets)

Dan. 3 – God is LORD over nature (burning fiery furnace)

Dan. 4 – God is LORD over all (He rules in the kingdom of men)

This is a LORDSHIP STORY!

Chapter four is the testimonial of King Nebuchadnezzar on how God humbled him and how he came to personally recognize the God of the Jews as his God. Earlier he had been forced to acknowledge God as sovereign in terms of knowledge and power, but it didn't become PERSONAL until chapter 4. Chapter four is the story of how Nebuchadnezzar came to PERSONAL faith in the God of the Jews.

### **Slide # 3**

#### ***Daniel 4 Outline***

vv. 1-3 Prologue of Praise

vv. 4- 34a Nebuchadnezzar's Testimonial of being Humbled

vv. 34b – 37 Epilogue of Praise

Realize that Daniel 4 is the personal testimony of Nebuchadnezzar written from a converted viewpoint – looking back on how he has come to where he now is as a true believer in the Most High God. This makes it a unique chapter in the Bible.

It begins with a prologue of praise from Nebuchadnezzar, which was sent out as official correspondence throughout the entire empire. Daniel may have helped him with it – because, after all, Daniel served intimately in the king's court (Dan. 2:49).

The fact that Nebuchadnezzar wanted to write such an account is most significant in respect to the total effect this experience had on his life. **-Leon Wood**

### **Daniel 4:1–18 (NKJV)**

**1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.**

This is the language of a formal official letter. It was written AFTER the life-changing events described in the passage. Nebuchadnezzar wrote it – but Daniel (under inspiration) chose to include it in the book. Note the word “**all**”. Nebuchadnezzar wanted EVERYONE to know about this.

This terminology of “**peoples, nations, and languages**” is the very same language used in 3:7 regarding the command for ALL to worship the golden image. Just as Nebuchadnezzar had earlier wanted ALL to conform to his idolatry, now he wants ALL to know about his newfound relationship with the Most High God.

He starts out with the customary greeting of “***Peace be multiplied to you.***”

**2 I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.**

One of the first signs of true conversion is that one wants to testify. It is remarkable that this king previously so full of himself now just wants to brag on God. He thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for him. Note it is PERSONAL in that he says, “***has worked for me.***” He doesn't speak about what God did TO him, but rather “FOR” him. God worked miraculously through signs and wonders for his sake – to bring him around.

God is very patient. We surmise that this testimony was about 30 years in the making! God indeed had worked to bring him to this point!

The chapter is bracketed by affirmations of praise. It's like two bookends to the testimony of Nebuchadnezzar.

### **Slide # 4**

#### **Daniel 4**

The Personal Testimony of Nebuchadnezzar

vv. 1-3 – ***Personal Affirmation of Praise...***

“signs and wonders...worked for me”

vv. 4-34a - ***How Nebuchadnezzar got there...***

vv. 34b – 37 ***Personal Affirmation of Praise***

“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven...”

At this point Nebuchadnezzar's heart is filled with praise for God. This is the fruit of true conversion – it just flows out.

**3 How great are His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion is from generation to generation.**

Nebuchadnezzar had seen great signs and wonders. He had seen Daniel reveal the secret of his dream, he had seen the three Hebrew children come through the fire, and most recently he had seen God restore his sanity.

Signs are miracles with a point – they are miracles that send a message – in this case that the God of the Jews is the One true God Who is sovereign over all. Nebuchadnezzar has gotten the message!

Earlier in life, Nebuchadnezzar was thinking of the future and what would come of his kingdom (Dan. 2:29). He was thinking about his own greatness and the legacy that he would leave. And then later in life (as will hear him testify in 4:30) he said, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?” He was full of himself and it was all about self. That was then – this is now!

Now all he can focus on is God's signs, His kingdom, and His dominion, testifying that it is God's kingdom that "***is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion*** [sovereignty/control] ***is from generation to generation.***"

He finally got it! Now he is declaring "It's all about God, It's all about Him!" He got it! He was now championing the sovereignty of God and not his own greatness!

He had hoped that his own kingdom might be eternal, but now Nebuchadnezzar realized that only the Kingdom of God can last forever. Eternity is never within man's limited grasp; it can only be attained by God. – **Charles Feinberg**

**Note:** Here he is not talking about the Davidic kingdom but God's sovereign rule over human history throughout time. As it says in verse 17 – "***the Most High rules in the kingdom of men***".

Nebuchadnezzar got it and he now wanted to tell everyone – God rules – He reigns – He is eternally sovereign. Now he tells us how he came to this point as seen in verses 4-34a.

**4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace.**

This is a cue that this happened later in his reign (605-562 BC) after he had won many battles and is now at rest. He had successfully completed many building projects and was flourishing in his palace. Everything was going beautifully! And then he had a dream...

**5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.**

**Shakespeare** made famous the line: "*Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown.*" There is a special weight of responsibility that comes with leadership. There are many pressures from many directions, but the most significant is internal divine pressure, as seen here.

This dream left him afraid and troubled. Almost all of us have experienced a "***nightmare***" only to be relieved when we wake up that none of it is reality. Suddenly, you are awake, and in short order, you can't even remember the details that were so alarming. However, in Nebuchadnezzar's case, the dream remained vivid and terrifying. He couldn't shake it.

**It is interesting** that God in the OT occasionally used dreams to speak to people who had no other source of divine revelation. He used it to get their attention (cf. Gen. 20:3; 40:8; 41:25-27). God may still get people's attention through dreams, but we have to be really careful here.

The Bible also warns about those who “***prophecy false dreams***” (Jer. 23:32) and those who “***tell dreams that are false***” (Zech. 10:2). Yes, God may use whatever means to get someone's attention, but it is the Word of God ALONE that is our measurement of TRUTH. The authoritative revelation of God is complete, as given in the Bible. Even in the OT, those who claimed to have a dream from God were to be measured by the truth of Scripture (Deut. 13:1-3).

### **Slide # 5**

#### **Isaiah 8:20 (NKJV)**

**20** To the law [*given by Moses*] and to the testimony [*given by the prophets*]! [**THE WORD OF GOD**] If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Clearly, in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the dream was from God, as verified by the very clearly established prophet of Daniel. Even Nebuchadnezzar, who was a pagan (prior to conversion), recognized that Daniel's ministry of interpreting dreams was legit. And again, the Bible itself tells us that Daniel, in this regard, was special, showing that this ability was not normative (Dan. 1:17 – also see Genesis 37).

**6 Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream.**

Once again, King Nebuchadnezzar called in all the incompetent quacks who were useless. We estimate that it has been about 30 years since the last troubling dream where Daniel explained to the king that all these “occultic wise men” could not reveal the secret in contrast to the God of heaven who could (Dan. 2:27-28).

Perhaps because it has been so long, he is willing to give them another try. Some suggest that he may have had the feeling that the dream wasn't favorable to him, and therefore, he called on these first (known for their flattery) to give him a positive spin.

Others suggest that this may also have been a TEST. Recall the king shrewdly tested them in chapter 2, where he demanded that they give the dream first, and then the interpretation. Only Daniel could give the dream and so his credibility was clearly established to give the interpretation.

Maybe there was a system to this order – the king knowing that Daniel was reliable. Would their interpretation of the dream be consistent with Daniel? That would have been a TEST! Whatever the reasoning, the various categories of “wise men” were called in first.

**7 Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation.**

Alas, they did not even venture a guess as to what the interpretation might be. I think one reason that they may not have wanted to do this is the reality of Daniel in the background – who was called in last. I think all these cultists as well as the king – they all knew that ONLY Daniel (by way of his God) could really interpret dreams. That was clearly established earlier. No way were they willing to take on Daniel and be contradicted by him, who was saved for last. They were forced to admit once again that they had no clue!

**8 But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, saying:**

“**But at last**” suggests that some time had passed before Daniel was brought in.

Two different names are used for Daniel in this verse. Evidently the king (now in his converted stage) calls him by his Judean (God-honoring) name, but at the same time in reiterating his pre-conversion story brings out that he went by the name “**Belteshazzar**” which was according to the name of Nebuchadnezzar’s god prior to his conversion.

Very possibly the king used “Belteshazzar” for identification purposes as this was the name Daniel was then known by throughout the empire.

The name Daniel means “God is my Judge”. Belteshazzar means “Bel protects his life”. It is thought that “Bel” meaning “Lord” was a title for Marduk considered to be the patron god of Babylon and chief over the Babylonian pantheon.

But note that even as a pagan Nebuchadnezzar realized the Spirit of the Holy God was in him.

This phrase “the Spirit of the Holy God” is found three times in this section (v. 8, 9, 18). Clearly that king recognized this reality made all the difference. He recognized there was a supernatural reality involved.

“***The Spirit of the Holy God***” (cf. 4:9, 18, 18; 5:11, 14) could just as well be translated as, “***the spirit of the holy gods***” which would reflect a pagan perspective. So, the question is this: Does this phrase represent Nebuchadnezzar’s new enlightened mindset regarding God (cf. Josh. 24:19), or is he still speaking as a pagan with a polytheistic view of the gods? Grammatically, it could go either way.

However, because of the qualifier “Holy” it is more likely that “the Spirit of the Holy God” is accurate because the pagans never referred to their gods as holy. Holy means unique or set apart – unlike any other. In contrast, the pagans had many gods who were very similar in nature.

Clearly Daniel’s God was “set apart” as He had been shown to do what none of the other supposed gods could do!

However, one takes it, the reality is that Nebuchadnezzar saw a supernatural reality at work in Daniel and therefore he told him his dream knowing that Daniel could interpret it as he had done in the past.

**9 “Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.**

Many years ago, as noted in Daniel 2:48, Daniel had been made “chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon” – a post he still held at this time. This may well explain why the “wise men” were not willing to fake it as Daniel was their boss in the Babylonian administration. I am thinking they knew something like that would not get past Daniel, and if exposed for trying to fake it, the outcome could be fatal.

Again, it is interesting that the chief administrator over this whole group was brought in last, especially since Nebuchadnezzar knew that the Spirit of the Holy God was in him and that he could explain his dream and give its interpretation. That is precisely why he had been elevated to be chief over all the magicians in the first place.



Nebuchadnezzar had full confidence that, indeed, Daniel could explain the dream to him. Again, that had already been established for all to see. Twice before, Nebuchadnezzar had acknowledged the God of Israel is sovereign - once in Daniel 2:47 and again in 3:29. He knew very well about Daniel's God intellectually, but he didn't yet know Him personally.

Lots of people know the reality of God as seen in the lives of His people. They haven't personally committed to God, but they know where to find us when they need prayer or they need help beyond themselves. That was Nebuchadnezzar. He now recounts how he told the dream to Daniel.

**10 These were the visions of my head while on my bed: I was looking, and behold, A tree in the midst of the earth, And its height was great.**

In this vision there was a great tall tree in the midst of the earth. It was hugely tall. In the OT it was common for trees to symbolically represent rulers (Judg. 9:7-15; Ezek. 31:2-14; Zech. 11:1-2).

Ancient records show that Nebuchadnezzar had a love for great trees – especially the famed trees of Lebanon. He traveled there to watch the felling of these great trees which were then brought back to Babylon for his building projects.

**11 The tree grew and became strong; Its height reached to the heavens, And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.**

**12 Its leaves were lovely, Its fruit abundant, And in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, And all flesh was fed from it.**

The tree in Nebuchadnezzar's vision was a GREAT tree that had a worldwide sway. It was great in height, beautiful, and useful for food and shelter. It provided food for all. It was truly impressive from every angle.

As we will see, this tree represented the greatness and strength of Nebuchadnezzar in his kingdom. Thus, he is portrayed as providing for his subjects. He was the man with the greatest influence in all the world.

**13 “I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven.**

Suddenly in this vision he saw a “watcher” who is called “a holy one” coming down from heaven. This holy watcher is universally thought to have been a holy angel.

Unique to Daniel (as seen here in chapter 4) the holy angels are called “watchers”. They are also called this in the extra-biblical literature as found in the book of Enoch. The holy angels are God’s servants who do God’s bidding. As seen here (and elsewhere) they are involved in both announcing and administering God’s judgment (cf. Gen. 18; Isa. 37; Zech. 1:8-17; Rev. 16). The word “angel” literally means “messenger”.

Angels serve God in various ways.

### **Slide # 6**

#### **Hebrews 1:14 (NKJV)**

**14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?**

Here in Daniel 4 they are called “watchers”. This alludes to the fact that they are God’s messengers constantly observing the activities of men and are ready to intervene as God directs.

I find it interesting that one of Paul’s reasons for proper feminine and masculine decorum in the context of the church assembled is because of the presence of angels (1 Cor. 11:10). We know from other NT texts that angels are very interested in us and our salvation (cf. 1 Cor. 4:9, 6:3; Eph. 3:10-12; 1 Pet. 1:12). Clearly the angels are watching how we carry on and this serves to drive home the point that “heaven” is watching. They are “watchers” ready to intervene at any time as directed by God.

They see all that goes on down here and report from time to time to God (Job 1:6; 2:1). The book of Daniel introduces many such beings and reveals their functions and their enormous power. Possibly, we all have those who watch over us (Pss. 34:7; 35:5). – **John Phillips**

As referenced earlier in Hebrews 1:14 I believe that the “watchers” are watching out for us as God’s people all the time. And even when we die, Luke 16 indicates that the angels transport us to paradise (cf. Lk. 16:22). They are ministering spirits who (among other things) minister to God’s people.

**14 He cried aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, And the birds from its branches.**

What a scene: Pictured was a beautiful gigantic tree and all manner of wildlife interacting with it, and then all of the sudden a booming voice from the “watcher” cried aloud, “***Chop down the tree***”.

The felling of a giant tree leaves a tremendous impression on the viewer.

TIMBER! TIMBER! Get out of the way – it's coming down! And huge trees fall hard!

**15 Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, Bound with a band of iron and bronze, In the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, And let him graze with the beasts On the grass of the earth.**

At verse 15 the figure in view suddenly changes from that of a tree to that of a person. The fallen tree is still in view, but it clearly now represents a person, and this person becomes the dominant focus of the dream. Of course, this represents Nebuchadnezzar. He is the fallen tree.

But note there is a consolation. The tree, while felled, is not completely annihilated. The stump and roots remain. The judgment, while severe, is not fatal. Enough is left so that it can grow back eventually.

Though Nebuchadnezzar is judged and humbled (chopped down) yet he is not destroyed. The makings of a comeback remain in place.

The fact that the stump and roots are bound with a band of iron and bronze seems to suggest protection. The judgment is allowed only to go so far. It is not total or complete. And this state of “protection” for the stump and roots was in the context of tender grass and being watered with the dew of heaven. This is the making of an eventual comeback.

### **Slide # 7**

#### **Daniel 4:26 (NKJV)**

**26** “And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, **your kingdom shall be assured to you, after** you come to know that Heaven rules.

God is so sovereign He can bring down Nebuchadnezzar and then from that felled position restore him again in due time. This is all God’s doing.

The end of verse 15 is very clear that a person (Nebuchadnezzar) is in view where it says “let him” (clearly a person) graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth.

God is about ready to put Nebuchadnezzar out to pasture. You have heard of “***the school of hard knocks***,” well, this was “***the school of the pasture***,” and he would be there for the 7-year program graduating with a higher view of God.

**16 Let his heart be changed from that of a man, Let him be given the heart of a beast, And let seven times pass over him.**

The word “heart” is a term that refers to the inner core of a person’s being. It is the seat of moral consciousness, of the choice of the will, involving mental processes but also emotions. So it is a very general term related to the spiritual core of a person. It is often translated as “mind”.

Nebuchadnezzar was about to lose his mind and revert to thinking and functioning like an animal. This was the judgment of God upon him. He was about to leave the palace and live out in the field like an animal.

The ability to think right is a blessing from God. We are all breaking down, and often because we live in a fallen world, people have all manner of health problems – often involving the mind. However, God is in charge of the mind-keys and sometimes as a matter of judgment (not always) but sometimes people are out of their minds as a matter of God’s judgment. This is where depravity takes people.

### **Slide # 8**

#### **Ephesians 4:17–18 (NKJV)**

**17** This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, **in the futility of their mind,**

**18 having their understanding darkened,** being alienated from the life of God, because of the **ignorance that is in them,** because of the **blindness of their heart;**

In effect, these people are spiritually crazy! Their depravity affects their ability to think straight. Often things are so bizarre that we fail to understand how it can be that people think in such perverted ways. But there is such a thing as God giving people over “to a depraved mind” that no longer works right (Rom. 1:28). Spiritually speaking – the world really is CRAZY!

In the last days when God brings Judgment on the world, part of that judgment will involve God causing people to go crazy.

### **Slide # 9**

#### **Zechariah 12:4 (NKJV)**

**4** In that day," says the LORD, "I will strike every horse with confusion, and **its rider with madness**; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.

Total confusion will overtake the world of rebellion. It will be total out of control mayhem for the enemies of God's people. It is never good to take on the God of Israel – He might drive you CRAZY! Never forget He controls the "mind keys".

### **Slide # 10**

#### **Deuteronomy 28:28 (NKJV)**

**28** The Lord will strike you with **madness** and blindness and **confusion of heart**.

Sometimes, the judgment of God involves madness (being crazy) and mental confusion. Sometimes, there may be other health-related reasons, but as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, it was a matter of judgment.

Nebuchadnezzar's judgment would continue for a period of "***seven times***" that would pass over him.

The word "***times***" simply means "***periods***" but does not specifically designate how long these seven periods would be. Seven in the Bible often denotes the number of completion.

Most commentators think that seven days, seven weeks, or even seven months, would not be long enough for Nebuchadnezzar to grow out his hair and nails to the extent as further described in the text as seen in Daniel 4:33.

Most commentators think that 7 years is in view. There are two good reasons for this. This same word "***times***" is clearly used in Daniel 7:25 in the sense of years.

### **Slide # 11**

**Daniel 7:25 (NKJV)**

**25** He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

Everyone agrees that in Daniel 7:25 three and one half years are in view which is corroborated by comparing Scripture with Scripture (cf. Dan. 9:27; 12:7; Rev. 11:2; 12:6, 14; 13:5).

Also note that a completely different word is used in verse 29 to denote “months”. Therefore, most likely “seven times” means “seven years”.

**17 ‘This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.’**

This decision (or edict) was by degree of the “watchers” (angels) and specifically by word of the holy ones – meaning holy angels. These are God’s special agents carrying out His bidding.

And the specific reason this is happening was to teach a lesson to the whole of mankind. Once in a while God works through a person in such a way that it is intended to be a “teachable moment” for the whole of mankind. Earlier in history we saw this in relation to Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus.

**Slide # 12****Exodus 9:16 (NKJV)**

**16** But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.

This here in Daniel 4 was again one of those times in which God is working in such a way as to hold forth a lesson for the whole world to see.

The lesson for all to see was really three-fold.

- 1) God wanted the whole world to see that it is He as the Most High Who rules in the kingdom of men.

People just think they are in charge, but they are not. God took the most powerful, the most successful, man in the world and put him down showing him that he really wasn't in charge or so great after all. God is in charge. He is sovereign.

- 2) God wants the world to see that it is He who puts people into positions of power. There are no self-made men.

### **Slide # 13**

#### **Daniel 2:21 (NKJV)**

**21** And He changes the times and the seasons; **He removes kings and raises up kings;** He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding.

Pilate thought he was all that – he thought he was a self-made man in a position of power, but Jesus schooled him.

### **Slide # 14**

#### **John 19:11 (NKJV)**

**11** Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been **given you from above**. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

#### **Romans 13:1 (NKJV)**

**1** Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.**

Not only did God raise up Nebuchadnezzar but He prophetically says that He is going to take him down and He did. But then He also raised him back up again – all in keeping with prophecy.

- 3) And thirdly, God sets in a position of leadership "the lowest of men".

It is interesting that Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar, with whom he co-ruled at first, thought of himself in a very small way. He called himself "my littleness, the son of a nobody." He also called himself, "insignificant, who among men was not visible." And again, "I, the weak, the feeble." This Was Nebuchadnezzar's father.

Now add to this that he is going to eat grass in the pasture like an animal, grow his hair out like eagles' feathers and his nails like bird claws. This would go on for seven years. You really can't get much more lowly than this – to have your earthly experience of the level of an animal.

God in effect was saying to Nebuchadnezzar, "You are very full of yourself, but I am going to humble you to the point where you could barely be described as a human being in terms of how you exist – eating out in the pasture like a mere animal – ungroomed and unkempt. And when you finally come to your senses, realizing that you are NOTHING in and of yourself and that you are totally dependent on God, then I will restore you once again." Thus, Nebuchadnezzar became a living example of this very verse.

People get all infatuated about people in leadership. Certainly we are called to honor them because of **the office** they hold, and yet we should also realize that God often sets up in a position of leadership the lowest of men.

There have been many rulers who had bats in their belfries and who were off their rockers. God says He sets over the kingdoms the basest of men: twenty-five hundred years of history since Nebuchadnezzar have demonstrated the truth of this statement.

**– J. Vernon McGee**

If people exercise authority in this life, it is only because God allows them to do so. There are no self-made men – just those who think so until they are humbled. Nebuchadnezzar was in that camp until he was humbled.

The last part of verse 17 really serves as a summary of the theme of the book of Daniel. God rules in the kingdom of men! He truly is sovereignly in charge. It is He who sets up and puts down and often He set in positions of leadership the lowest of men – showing they really had nothing to do with it.

**18 "This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you."**

After recounting the dream Nebuchadnezzar then asked Daniel to declare its interpretation after noting that NONE of the wise men of his kingdom were able to do so.



But on the other hand he was totally confident that Daniel was able to do so and noted the reason: “**for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you.**” Clearly, Nebuchadnezzar got it – that Daniel was different because of his God Who was uniquely set apart. At this point, Daniel had a whole life of credibility behind him. And it spoke with power to this pagan king.

Daniel would then go on to interpret the dream which came to be fulfilled to the letter in Nebuchadnezzar’s experience which resulted in his conversion.

Daniel 4 is Nebuchadnezzar’s conversion story. He had long known about the God of the Jews. He had admitted that their God is “the God of gods” in His omniscience (Dan. 2:47). He had admitted that their God is all powerful over all other gods (Dan. 3:29). He had openly acknowledged that their God is “the Most High God” (Dan. 3:26).

The problem was that Nebuchadnezzar did not yet know their God as his own personal God. It was all just intellectual and not personal. It is not enough to know about God – one has to know Him personally!

Nebuchadnezzar’s conversion was a LORDSHIP conversion. This was through and through a LORDSHIP issue. And what I mean by this is that Nebuchadnezzar came to personally recognize the Sovereignty of God over Him. It became personal. He then bowed before the truth of God’s sovereign authority over him.

All true conversions are LORDSHIP conversions, meaning in conversion people come to personally bow before the truth of God’s sovereign authority and accept Him as their personal Lord-God. This is Nebuchadnezzar’s story and it is the story of every true conversion.

Fast forward to the NT and we find that God has ultimately and completely revealed Himself in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. True faith believes in Him as personal Lord and Savior. Jesus said...

### **Slide # 15**

#### **John 17:3 (NKJV)**

**3** And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

The entire gospel of John was written so that we might believe in Jesus as Lord-God and Savior (Jn. 20:30-31).

The climax of the book of John (the gospel of belief) is the NT conversion of “**Doubting Thomas**” who said he wouldn’t believe in the risen Christ unless he saw Him for himself.

A few days later Jesus appeared to Thomas, and when Thomas saw Him, he said to Him, “**My Lord and my God!**” which is to say my “**God-Master**”. Jesus then said, “*Thomas, you have seen and believed*”. This is what it means to truly believe in Jesus. We must believe in Him as “**My Lord and my God!**” It must be personal! That is the whole point!

### **Slide # 16**

#### **Romans 10:9 (LSB)**

**9** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

#### **Romans 10:13 (LSB)**

**13** for “WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”

All the great preachers in the history of the Church have been Lordship preachers. Go back and read them! Read the Reformers, read Whitefield, read the Wesley’s, read Edwards, read Spurgeon, read Tozer, and on and on.

But then in the twentieth century more and more it became popular to preach what I call a “Lordless Gospel”. They began to emphasize that one can receive Christ as Savior while at the same time rejecting Him as Lord. About 35 years ago this came to a head as John MacArthur addressed it in his book “**The Gospel According to Jesus**”. Three factions developed. There was the radical non-Lordship position espoused by Zane Hodges which was heretical. Zane went so far as to say one could be an unbelieving believer.

Charles Ryrie took a more moderate non-Lordship position, and John MacArthur took the strong Lordship position. They all wrote books.

But Ryrie, in his book titled “**So Great Salvation**” wrote:

“The object of faith or trust is the Lord Jesus Christ, however little or much one may know about Him. The issue about which we trust Him is His ability to forgive our sins and take us to heaven. And because He is the Lord God, there is an element in bowing before Him and acknowledging Him as a most superior Person when one trusts Him for salvation.” (p. 121)

When I read that, I said, “**What are we arguing about!**” Ryrie just totally conceded that in saving faith one must appropriate the Lordship of Christ.

In salvation we bow before Him acknowledging the truth of His sovereign Lordship over us! We believe in Him as our sovereign Lord and Savior!

In one of the Napoleonic [Nuh·pow·lee·**aa**·nuhk] wars, Lord Nelson defeated the French navy. The defeated admiral brought his flagship alongside Nelson’s vessel and went aboard to make his surrender. He approached Nelson smilingly, with his sword swinging at his side. ***He held out his hand to the victor.***

Nelson made no response to this gesture but said quietly, “***Your sword first, sir.***” Laying down the sword was a visible token of surrender.

In conversion, we lay down the sword of our rebellion and self-will. We submit to the truth of His sovereign Lordship over us. This is a humbling reality! In effect, we surrender our “lordship” to His Lordship! This is the great issue in life! And in this Nebuchadnezzar becomes a great example for the whole of mankind. God made a WORLD example out of him!

*Make me a captive, Lord,  
And then I shall be free,  
Force me to render up my sword  
And I shall conqueror be.  
(George Matheson)*

As Savior Jesus died for all our sins – as Lord over all He arose again the third day.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved!