

Daniel

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[0 : 00] I've already considered the interpretation that Daniel gave to Nebuchadnezzar regarding this great tree. And it is simply a prognostication of what is going to happen to Nebuchadnezzar, and it will result in the breaking of the man.

We spent considerable time on this in our last session, indicating how utterly important it is that our wills be broken and submitted unto God's will.

The only person who was ever born on the face of this earth with a will that did not need to be broken was our Lord Jesus Christ. And it wasn't difficult for him to say, nevertheless, not my will, but your will be done.

All the rest of us were born with a will or a volition intact. And as soon as we have opportunity, we begin exercising it.

And it also provides the basis for conflict, because when my will conflicts with your will, something's got to give.

[1 : 12] And that's where conflict enters the picture. It doesn't make any difference whether you're talking about a marriage or a situation between two nations, because a nation is nothing more than a corporate collection of individual human wills.

That's, in essence, all it really is. Nebuchadnezzar is a man who is ferociously proud. He has got an ego.

Well, let me put it this way. Donald Trump's ego could not begin to compare with Nebuchadnezzar's. And that's saying something.

It's, you know, this is not a political statement. It's just a statement of reality, you know. And I don't think anybody can seriously question that. That's the way it is.

So this man is destined for a confrontation with the Almighty. Guess who's going to win?

[2 : 17] Yeah. So the sentence has already been delivered. I wonder what Nebuchadnezzar's response to it was. Because he got that information from what at the time appeared to be an unimpeachable source.

Daniel. A man who is described as one in whom the spirit of the gods resides. Now, they said that out of ignorance, putting a plural on God.

But it was, the truth is, it was one in whom the spirit of the God existed. And Daniel's already established a reputation by giving the king earlier an interpretation of the great image.

The head of gold and the chest and the arms of silver and so on. So he's already got some credibility. And when he delivers this about this tree. And the tree is Nebuchadnezzar.

It's you, O king. And this tree is going to be cut down. And Nebuchadnezzar says, ooh. But the stump and the root will remain.

[3 : 30] Indicating there's going to be a comeback. But it's only going to be after the pain of having been cut down. And the result of that being cut down, we'll see here in, well, let's look at verse 28.

Chapter 4. All this happens in Nebuchadnezzar the king. Twelve months later. This is twelve months after Daniel gave him the interpretation of what was going to be falling.

And I can imagine during those twelve months, he's thinking to himself, I wonder, could Daniel be wrong this time?

Or if he's right, nothing's happened yet. I feel fine. And I wonder if he didn't just kind of put it out of sight, out of mind, and forget about it.

He got involved in the business of being king. And the ego thing surfaced again. And as he walks out on the walls of this great city, Babylon, and we are told by archaeologists who have done some preliminary excavation there, that they estimate that the walls of this thing were so thick that two or three chariots could ride abreast on those walls around.

[4 : 59] So you're kind of talking like a three-way street being wide enough on the top of these walls. And that's pretty dominating, really.

And apparently, Nebuchadnezzar has lost sight of the interpretation, got involved in everything that was happening. And as he walked out there, and as I mentioned earlier, I don't think he just walked, I think he strutted.

Joe, what? Go ahead. He was thinking, there's no way, with all this war on me, that anybody can defeat me. I am so protected. That's what his thinking was. Well, I'm sure. Impegnable.

He was thinking, I'm going away. Can anybody get to me? Yep. And he had, you know, we could take the same attitude with our ICBMs and things like that, and put confidence in those.

But God is unlimited in his creativity and the ways he can bring people down. And this is going to be a very personal thing. And as old Nebuchadnezzar struts around the wall, and he looks over the magnificent expanse of the city out there, and the wall, and Nineveh, and you've got to remember, fellas, because this area, this place, was the latest, the best, the biggest, the finest, the most expensive, the most architecturally appealing, the most everything.

[6 : 22] And as Nebuchadnezzar struts out there on the wall and looks it over, and he says to himself, You know, Neb, you've done really well. Is not this great Babylon that I have built?

And I'm sure he got a lot of recognition, a lot of pats on the back and everything else. But when he said that, it is as if an unheard voice came from heaven that says, That's it.

That's enough. And the text goes on to tell us, While the word, verse 31, was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven saying, Nebuchadnezzar to you, It is declared, Sovereignty has been removed from you.

You are no longer in charge. Actually, being in charge, if you are a human being like Nebuchadnezzar was, and like we all are, being in charge is just an illusion after all.

We like to think we are in charge. But we aren't. And I've posed some hypotheticals to people who think they are in charge.

[7 : 55] Were you in charge at the corner of 4th and Main when an accident occurred that almost took your life and put you in the hospital for a couple of months? Were you in charge then?

Nope. Were you in charge when you got fired from that job that you think you were unjustly fired from? Were you in charge then?

Nope. Were you in charge when the doctor brought in a diagnosis that was negative and told you that this could possibly be a terminal disease? Were you in charge then?

Nope. Truth be told, fellas, we never are in charge. We just like to think we are because we all want to be in command of ourselves and of the situation.

We all want to call the shots. We want to be captains of our own destiny. But it is merely an illusion. And Nebuchadnezzar was suffering from the same kind of an illusion.

[8 : 56] He liked to think he was in charge. And the Lord says, sovereignty has been removed from you and you will be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field.

This is a real reduction of humanity. You will be given grass to eat like cattle and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever he wishes.

Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagle's feathers and his nails like bird's claws.

Wow. I don't know what else to call this but some kind of a divinely inflicted temporary insanity. I don't know what else he exhibited but my guess is that he somehow and this obviously from the text is something that God simply imposed upon him and Nebuchadnezzar almost immediately became not his majesty but a persona non grata.

He began manifesting animal like behavior apparently overnight and aides and those closest to him are asking and wondering what is this?

[10 : 50] what's going on here? And it was clear that Nebuchadnezzar was just out of his right mind. No longer could he enjoy the company of other humans.

They wanted to get rid of this guy. What are you going to do with somebody that's acting like an animal? Turn him out the pasture. What else can we do? And that's apparently precisely what they did.

And this is going to go on for a period of seven years. I have no idea and no way of knowing what was going on in the mind of Nebuchadnezzar at this time.

Did he have periodic moments of sanity mingled with this onset of animal-like behavior and acting like an animal and eating like an animal?

I don't know. We aren't given any details. But Nebuchadnezzar was obviously someone who was in process.

[11 : 59] God was doing something in the heart and mind of this animal-like behaving man. And he is going to come to the place where he recognizes what he needs to recognize and that is that he is not in charge.

And verse 34 tells us at the end of that period seven years boy it's a long time to go through something like this.

I raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me. My full-fledged sanity came back but this time with an entirely different attitude.

Here is the testimony of a broken man. And fellas it's the best thing that ever happened to Nebuchadnezzar. When God breaks you it's only because he wants to put you back together again the right way.

And that's what he's doing for Nebuchadnezzar. It's a terrible price to pay but when you consider what is at stake and eternity being a long long time it's the best thing that ever happened to Nebuchadnezzar.

[13 : 27] The end of that period I Nebuchadnezzar raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason return to me. My thinking capacity my reasoning powers my logic and now he's seeing everything in a different light.

Actually what he is seeing is himself and the world as it really is. Not as it was colored by all of the trappings of royalty and the people that worshipped him and all the rest of it.

Now he sees the world through a pair of really honest eyes that's giving him the true scoop and it is the best thing that ever happened to him.

I blessed the most high and praised and honored him who lives forever. Why? For his dominion is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom endures from generation to generation and all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing in comparison to the regal majesty of the true God of heaven.

But he does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth and no one can ward off his hand or say to him what hast thou done?

[15 : 03] In other words give an account for yourself. Why have you done thus and so? Kind of reminds you of that passage in Romans shall the thing made say to him that made it why hast thou made me thus?

No more than a potter than a vessel that is turned out by a potter on the potter's wheel can stand up and say to the potter why did you make me into this kind of a pot?

I didn't want to be this kind of pot I want to him I don't know what else to call this I think of it as the divine appropriateness I don't know if there is such a word as appropriateness or not but if there isn't there ought to be because that's what God is he is divine and whatever it is that he decrees or decides is appropriate that means fitting that means proper and then the question becomes according to whose estimation if everything God did and everything God does is appropriate or fitting according to whose standard well it certainly can't be according to human standards for the simple reason that how many different variations would there be of that it has to be appropriate and fitting in accordance with the only one who is charged with perfection personified it has to be appropriate according to

God's measurement God's standard of appropriate and I don't know about you but I've been giving this some thought and it provides for me incredible peace inwardly it's almost another way of fashioning Romans 8 28 whatever God does he does it perfectly and his timing is perfect and the intensity is perfect and the result is perfect not according to us but according to him and let me ask you this does this extend even to the eternal state I don't see how it cannot God cannot be cut off with perfection for a temporary situation and not enjoy perfection in an eternal situation and what this means among other things is we talk a lot about especially as

Christians we talk a lot about heaven and hell and who's going there and who's not and all the rest of it and I am convinced that part of this appropriateness is the divine prerogative and it involves where everybody is to what degree or extent they are enduring suffering enjoying whatever is part

of that appropriateness in other words in the final analysis where everybody is going to be what everybody is going to be experiencing will be absolutely right it will be appropriate now according to our standards it may be severely lacking it may be severely painful it may be severely this or that or something else but in the mind of the only one whose opinion really matters it's going to be absolutely as it ought to be that's quite that's quite a concept in other words can you improve upon what

[19 : 32] God considers appropriate I think not so I take comfort in that and relax in that because it's another way of looking at Romans 8:28 and it's divides Romans 8:28 divides the segment but it's still appropriate and it is God works all things together for good for those who love God it is for their good and that appropriateness is part and parcel of that being for our good and for those who for whatever reason reject the ultimate price that Christ paid for them for those who reject that and will not give him credit for having purchased them there's no reason why they should enjoy what others who have recognize that nor will they and whatever it is they experience in the afterlife that will be completely unlike heaven whatever that is figurative fire literal fire darkness who knows what whatever it is will be appropriate it will be what it ought to be because

God cannot operate any other way than being divinely appropriate wow my reason returned to me my majesty and splendor will return to me for the glory of my kingdom this word must have got out to all of his age and everybody hey Nebuchadnezzar is back and he's in his right mind and he's not eating grass anymore like the animal he is his old self but there's something about him that's really different he's the same guy but he's a different guy he's undergone something well I think what he has undergone is what we would equate with regeneration call it if you will hey if anybody ever had a new birth here's a new birth in so many different ways Joe yeah we'll go on in this

Daniel further on he had this rebirth here he recognizes the god who's the powerful the son but what he failed to do was to give up his other gods that's what the mistake Nebuchadnezzar made that's why he has trouble later on as we go on into the book he forgot he didn't give up his other gods and that's a lesson for us we recognize God we've got to get rid of these other gods too like materialism and whatever you want to call it he didn't do that and we'll see that later it reminds me of a statement that is given for the Israelites that said that they they worshiped the Lord and served other gods what how can you do that how can you do that how can you worship the Lord and serve other gods that is clearly a contradiction and tell us this is nothing more than a perfect illustration of a drum we've been beating for a long time and that is man thinks reasons applies logic with a warped intellect with skewed logic this is the basis for idolatry this is the basis for worshiping idols this is the basis for

Islam it is the basis for Hinduism it is the basis for Confucius it is the basis for every aberrant religion that exists it is the basis for Baal in the Old Testament it is the basis for Chemosh the god of the Moabites it is the basis for all of the foreign gods found in the Old Testament it is the basis of the Greek gods that Paul encountered when he went to Athens that they had statues on every corner to different gods they even had one to the unknown god warped intellect among the intelligentsia and I doubt very seriously if you could have found a more intelligent or gifted people intellectually in the first century than what you would have found in Athens Greece this was the hub of intellectual prowess there in

Athens and that's what Paul confronted and he said you people are really religious you've got all of these gods how did they come up with that that's the faulty intellect this is and Paul describes that in Romans 1 when he says even though there was a time when they knew God they glorified recognized him acknowledged him not as God but became futile in their imaginations that's empty in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened and fellas it's not talking about the blood pump heart it's talking about your mentality your thinking mechanism which is often referred to as a man thinketh in his heart so is he and the thinking process is darkened we do not see the light and the truth as it really is where are you going to get that right here it's the only place that provides it it's the entrance of thy word gives light and everything else is darkness so as we apply our minds to the scriptures what we are doing is we are renewing our mind

[25 : 56] Romans 12:1 you renew your mind by putting into it truthful information that will conflict with untruthful information already stored in your mind that you've accumulated over the years we all have and it sets up a conflict you've got this new information that is demanding a place in your mind and it conflicts with the old stuff that has been there and the question is are you willing to jettison the old stuff and replace it with the new from the light of the word and begin tracking with

that that's what this is all about that's what it means to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ we become more and more like him as we reflect the fruit of the spirit as opposed to the works of the flesh where does the works of the flesh come from out of that skewed intellect out of that warped thinking that establishes a whole set of wrong priorities and a wrong agenda and that's what we follow that's the old nature that's the flesh and

God wants us to put that to death how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein so we've been given every advantage and every benefit that we need for moving out that old garbage that we all automatically think with and replace it with the new the life of God's word questions or comments invite okay so my reason returned to me that is my ability to think logically and my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out but they weren't doing that before so I was reestablished in my sovereignty and surpassing greatness was added to me and fellas here is another principle that I see injected in this Nebuchadnezzar had a rude awakening you talk about a slow learner it took him seven years to get with the program and God is saying

Nebuchadnezzar will take just as long as it takes and you know God's silver bullet is repentance always has been always will be it was true for Nineveh when Jonah preached it was true in the book of Genesis repentance means to change your mind and Nebuchadnezzar underwent a drastic change of mind he repented he reversed himself from thinking he was really big stuff top dog and he now is submerging all of that in the recognition that there is one who really is in charge I Nebuchadnezzar praise exalt and honor the king of heaven for all his works are true and his ways just and he is able to humble those who walk in pride and Nebuchadnezzar could have said and I am the poster boy for that

I am God's living example and God always the way back to God if we stray and if we err the way back is always the same it's repentance it's a change of mind question comment yeah well like Joe was saying later this is this is upcoming Nebuchadnezzar is going to have a real change of heart real change of mind but like so many who become believers their lifestyle and their productivity etc. is spotty it is not consistent someone has described a typical Christian life as two steps forward one step back two step forward one step back fellas none of us have this thing called life down path none of us have it all together and I remember somebody saying one time no he says I don't I don't want to go to church I can't stand all of those people there I said what do you mean he said well they're just a bunch of people that get together and congratulate each other on how good they are how wonderful they are and I said no no no there may be some churches like that but you don't understand what church is all about church is not a place for people to get together and congratulate each other on how good they are it's a place where people come together and they acknowledge their weakness and their flaws and their need for each other and their desire to worship the God of heaven so church is not a place for people that have it all together it's a place for people who know they don't and they come together for common reasons

[31 : 30] I misspoke earlier I was wrong I misspoke earlier what I said about a later king was a later person in charge of Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar it'll be his son Belshazzar yes yes yes I misspoke it was not Nebuchadnezzar it's a later one that does not believe in the hand of the God yeah I appreciate you clarifying that and Belshazzar Belshazzar is not going to learn from his daddy yeah two other things you mentioned seven years is a long time but for us it's a short time how many of us take a lot longer than seven years to acknowledge some of our folks you're right you're right good point the second thought changing the subject completely but what Bush is here all and all the tributes to Bush this week what a wonderful

Christian testimony that has been yeah I appreciate I didn't see all of it but he did see most of it and I think it was very telling very impressive good You know, and what, talking about the president, remember when Saddam Hussein went into Kuwait, and we protected Kuwait, and we drove him back.

And then he stopped before going in and killing Saddam Hussein and doing away with that. That is the way the Lord would have wanted. Here's why. The Lord put Saddam Hussein in charge. He knows he's a dictator. The Lord allowed him, just like our scripture here says, he allowed Saddam Hussein to be. God put it. If we did, Bush did, his son did wrong, see, by going in and killing him and destroying him because we were playing God.

The United States was playing God because they weren't attacking us or killing us. And we found out they didn't even have weapons of mass destruction. So we had nothing to worry about from

Saddam Hussein. But yet we went in and took over and did what we thought.

[33 : 34] But God didn't want that. God had him set up. Look what's happened in the world. He did that. Look at all those splinoff groups that have come out and caused more killing. And we're still in a war with them right now today because of that.

So we tried to take God into our hands, see. God put Saddam Hussein there. We shouldn't say that Saddam Hussein shouldn't be there. Even though he's a bad guy, we know he's a dictator. It's not us. It's God's will, not the United States' will, not man's will.

And that's what we did. That's what, you can just see it happen that way. It's easy to see that hindsight. It made it worse. Yeah, it is easy. It's the fight, it's the fight it's the war's. And we've all got 20-20 hindsight.

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.