

Daniel 05-12-04b

Let's pick up our study now in Daniel chapter 4, after this period of humiliation, Nebuchadnezzar is restored. In verse 34 it says, At the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever. For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation.

All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. He does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Isn't this amazing, Nebuchadnezzar knows that there is a civilization other than the one on this earth, and that God rules it just as he does mankind.

No one can restrain his hand, or say to him, What have you done? At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me. I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me.

Well, this is quite an interesting episode, again, because Nebuchadnezzar is the king of the Jews. Remember we talked about how Herod, in the days of John the Baptist, is a reflection of the national attitude and sort of the national fate, whereby dallying with John and neither accepting his message nor getting rid of him, he just sort of sits the fence for a time, and then eventually he is forced to choose, and he chooses to execute John, and then his fate is pretty much sealed. In the same way, Nebuchadnezzar hears the truth from Daniel and from the three friends, and he acknowledges it, he accepts it, but he doesn't really act on it.

But he is a believer. He recognizes God, but he forgets God, and his pattern is much like the nation of Israel itself, who recognized God in Egypt, came out by faith, and then forgot God in the wilderness and was disciplined for forty years, and they are even now, in Nebuchadnezzar's day, under discipline for seventy years. Nebuchadnezzar himself, this period of insanity, of demotion, and of senselessness, lasts for seven years, and Matt pointed out on the break, you have to look at the future of the nation of Israel itself, because there is seven years left to run in the history of Old Testament Israel that is yet future, and there is going to be a time of senselessness, where there is a remnant, you have the 144,000 servants of God, but Israel as a whole, the difficulties that they are going to experience in Daniel's seventieth week, are in large measure due to failure to heed, failure to acknowledge the God of Israel, and Jerusalem is going to be at the heart and at the center of much of that time of tribulation.

Well we conclude chapter four by seeing Nebuchadnezzar say, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of Heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And this is going to be the refrain that Israel itself is going to pick up and maintain at the time when it is restored to the land, and the kingdom promises, the covenant promises to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to David, to Moses, all of those covenant promises to the nation of Israel are fulfilled.

Those who walk in pride He is able to put down, and this is our Achilles heel, this is what took Satan out of the throne room of God, our soul is the throne room of God, and we can exit and suffer the same sort of fall as Satan did if we do not identify and root out pride.

Pride is what puts Nebuchadnezzar on his hands and knees feeding on the grass for seven years until he lifts his eyes to Heaven. Hopefully God doesn't have to put us through something like that as He has done with the nation of Israel and as He has done throughout history. God is sovereign and because we are not Calvinist we don't dwell to a great extent on the sovereignty of God, but it is something we ought to take note of because it is a fact and we don't want to do it too little justice just because others have done it too much.

The sovereignty of God is a biblical principle, it is taught throughout the scriptures. 1 Kings 22.19 Micaiah says hear the word of the Lord, I saw the Lord sitting on His throne and all the host of Heaven standing by on His right hand and on His left. This is one of your earlier visions of the heavenly throne of God, the heavenly perspective that we have seen in Ezekiel that we see in the book of Revelation.

Micaiah way back in the days of the divided kingdom in the days of Jehoshaphat sees the heavenly throne room and sees the ranks of the angels surrounding that throne. Isaiah chapter 6 and verse 1, of course Isaiah is in the time of the Assyrian incursion where the ten northern tribes go out. Isaiah also sees God sitting on a throne, Isaiah 6.1 high and lifted up, the train of His robe filled the temple.

Which temple? The heavenly temple, the same one that John sees open in our study in Revelation chapter 12 I think it is. Above it stood the seraphim, each one had six wings, with two he covered his face, two he covered his feet, with two he flew. One cried to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.

And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. The door of the temple in heaven is shaken by the voice of the one that cries out, saying this, holy, holy, holy. Ezekiel chapter 1 and verse 26, we have already seen that in our Ezekiel study, picture of God on His throne.

In our passage, later on we will find it in Daniel chapter 7 and verse 9. Daniel says, he is in the middle of seeing the vision of the horns and the little horn, we are going to be looking at this in our Revelation study this next time. He says in 7.9, I watched until thrones were put in place and the ancient of days was seated, his garment was white as snow, the hair of his head was like pure wool, his throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire. Ezekiel saw wheels and so did Daniel.

Fiery stream issued and came forth from before him. Isn't it interesting that in Daniel's vision here, there is a fiery stream issuing from the throne of God in the millennial kingdom and in the kingdom of the Father, it is water and in the eternal kingdom it is living water that flows from before the throne of God. So we basically have a choice, what kind of stream do we want to

experience from the throne of God, the stream of fire or the stream of water.

A thousand thousands ministered to him, ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated and the books were opened. In Daniel's day, these books would have been scrolls, possibly tablets.

I just showed you an inscription. In the days of the Babylonians, a lot of records were inscribed on clay tablets and then those were baked and so you have these great caches, these great troves of tablets, most of which have never been translated. Did you realize that a lot of the ancient inscriptions that have been recovered in archaeology have not been translated? There aren't enough people who know enough cuneiform and enough of the ancient language to translate them.

There are great rafts of these things that have never been translated. Maybe somebody will work on those during the thousand years of the millennium. Well, the sovereignty of God is taught, you see it from the imagery of God's throne.

Of course, not only in the Old Testament, but also in the New Revelation 4.2, after it says come up here, John also sees the vision of God on his throne. You see that again in Psalm 11 and verse 4. This is a little bit more poetic view. The Lord is in his holy temple.

The Lord's throne is in heaven. His eyes behold. His eyelids test the sons of men.

The Lord tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence, his soul hates. Upon the wicked he will rain coals. Fire and brimstone and a burning wind shall be the portion of their cup.

Psalm 11.4-6. That psalm goes on, by the way, to say the Lord is righteous. He loves righteousness. His countenance beholds the upright.

We want to be in a place where the countenance of God shines upon us, not the fire of God raining upon us. It just sort of stands to reason because God is sovereign. Psalm 45 and verse 6. Of course, this is a common theme in the psalms.

Psalm 45.6 says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness.

Therefore, God, your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than your companions. All your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces by which they have made you glad. Do you remember that great song? I remember T. Ernie Ford singing that on one of my mother's records.

Out of the ivory palaces, only his great eternal love made my Savior go, to leave the ivory palaces and come to earth and take on the form of a servant. King's daughters are among your honorable women. At your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.

This is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ with the bride at his side dressed in gold from Ophir, the finest gold known in the ancient world. Sovereignty. God has no constraints other than his own character.

And thankfully, as you've seen in these passages, righteousness is one of the constraints of God's character. His scepter is a scepter of righteousness. His love is for righteousness and he hates wickedness.

This is a good thing. You think about an all-powerful being in the universe. What if he was capricious? What if he was arbitrary? What if he was the god of the Calvinists who created a race of people and then just sort of threw a dart at the board and said, well, I'll rescue that one and that one and that one and all the rest of them I'm going to annihilate.

We really had no option. The fact that God is love, the fact that God is righteousness, that he is fair and just, that he keeps his word, that he keeps his promises, that he's merciful, that he is long-suffering, we ought to be exceedingly thankful and grateful because if he wasn't, what could anyone do? What if Satan really was the God who controlled our fate? Heaven help us all, literally. The sovereignty that God exercises has a goal, it has a purpose, it's one thing to have power, it's something else to use that power in the service of some goal.

What are God's goals? What does his sovereignty achieve? Well, in a word, it is *tov*, or in another word, it is *agathos*. *Tov* in the Old Testament Hebrew, *agathos* in New Testament Greek, both mean good, good of intrinsic value and quality. You find this stated clearly in Genesis chapter 50 by Joseph talking to his brothers, as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for *tov*, meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day to save many people alive.

It's a great thing. Most people, especially reform theology influence has brought this about where when we think about the sovereignty of God, we think about predestination, we think about who then can be saved and judgment and so on, but what is the exercise of God's sovereignty? What does it accomplish? To bring about as it is this day to save many people alive. You meant it for evil, God meant it for good.

Even the captivities of Israel, God meant it for good. Even the captivity of Daniel and his three friends, God meant it for good. Daniel had no inkling, had no possible way of knowing when he was dragged away from his family and his country and everything he knew that God meant it for good.

It seemed like a disaster. It seemed like a catastrophe. And it is only faith that gives us confidence that when God exercises his sovereignty, he means it for good, to save many people alive.

That is the goal and the direction of God's sovereignty. You find the same thing in Acts 2.23. You remember Peter standing up on the great day of the Feast of Pentecost and giving his sermon and he talks about the Lord Jesus Christ and he says that the Lord Jesus was attested by

God to you by miracles, wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst and you yourselves also know him being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death, whom God raised up having loosed the pains of death and so on. David says concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken.

Therefore my heart rejoiced and my tongue was glad and my flesh also will rest in hope for you will not leave my soul in Hades nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life. You will make me full of joy in your presence.

That is part of one of the most powerful sermons ever preached. It is the illumination of God's work in sending the Lord Jesus to the cross and then raising him up. That is the part and parcel of our salvation.

That is our hope. That is the exercise of God's sovereignty to save many people alive. Judas, the Jews, the Romans meant it for evil, God meant it for good and it's the fulfillment and the culmination of that Genesis passage.

Same thing in Acts 13, 26 and following. By this time in Acts you have the Apostle Paul preaching, men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, those among you who fear God, to you this word of salvation has been preached. Those who dwell in Jerusalem and their rulers because they did not know him, nor even the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning him, though they found no cause for death in him.

They asked Pilate that he should be put to death. When they had fulfilled all that was written concerning him, they took him down from the tree, laid him in a tomb, but God raised him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses to the people.

And we declare to you glad tidings, the promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us, their children, in that he has raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, you are my son, today I have begotten you. You skip down to verse 41, behold you despisers marvel and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which you will by no means believe, though one were to declare it to you.

God sovereignly implements grace, mercy, deliverance, but man has the option. You and I are the recipients of God's grace and mercy, and yet we still have the option day by day of whether or not God's sovereign power is going to act on our behalf, and the river that flows from his throne is a river of life, a river of healing, a river of comfort, a river by which we can be planted and bring forth fruit in our season, or if it is going to be that stream of fire that issues forth in judgment. Think about Nebuchadnezzar.

Think about his place, which he sort of unwittingly achieved when he took the Jews captive, and brought himself under the eye of the Lord God. Nebuchadnezzar had to learn the sovereignty

of God, just as the Israelites are learning it, the people of Judah are learning it. God resists the proud.

God gives grace to the humble. Psalm 93 is the last passage we're going to look at in connection with the sovereignty of God. This whole psalm deals with it.

It's an apt summary of it. Psalm 93 says, The Lord reigns. He is clothed with majesty.

The Lord is clothed. He has girdled himself with strength. Surely the world is established so that it cannot be moved.

Your throne is established from old. You are from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O Lord.

The floods have lifted up their voice. The floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, than the mighty waves of the sea.

Your testimonies are very sure. Holiness adorns your house, O Lord, forever. And that's the whole psalm, just five verses.

But it is a testament to the sovereignty of God, the overruling power of God. There is no flood tide that can come our way over which God does not have sovereign control. To the extent that we are tossed about by storms, it is allowed by God.

In some cases, sent by God. And we determine why. Is it for strengthening? Is it for challenge? Is it for learning and encouragement? Or is it for discipline? Is it to turn us and cause us to repent and change our mind? Each of us is challenged to examine his own soul and live in the way that God has chosen us to live in.

To live in the light of God's word and analyze our challenges and our difficulties. And our prosperity tests and our blessing tests. And ask ourselves, why is God blessing me? It's easy to talk about crisis and challenge, but what about areas of blessing? Why is God blessing me? Does he just smile on me because I'm a fair haired child? There is purpose in our blessings and our prosperities, just as there is purpose in our adversities and our challenges.

Why is God blessing us with time? Maybe we need to be investing that time in something. Why is God blessing us with resources? Maybe we need to be investing those resources in something. Why is God blessing us with relationship? Maybe there is truth that we need to be speaking in those relationships.

Why is God blessing us with talent? Why is God blessing us with ability? Why is God blessing us with opportunity? We have a responsibility in areas of blessing to honor God, to look to God, to keep an eye on heaven, to lift our eyes to heaven and ensure that like Nebuchadnezzar, if we find ourselves with a lot of potential and a lot of power and a lot of wherewithal to use it and implement it and be stewards of it in a way that recognizes who is sitting on the throne in heaven. And who deserves glory and who deserves praise. It's just as much a challenge in our

areas of blessing as it is in our times of testing.

We honor God whether we are abased or whether we abound. Remember the Apostle Paul said, I have learned both how to be abased and how to abound. We have to learn how to abound.

Many times we are lousy abounders. They talk about lousy rebounders in basketball, but we can be lousy abounders. Where like Israel, we quickly lose sight of the one who gives every good and perfect gift.

Well, chapter five, Belshazzar's Feast. We began this a couple of weeks ago. Belshazzar the king made this great feast for a thousand of his lords.

Have you ever been to a gathering of a thousand people? President Bush spoke at the Naval Academy last week and I was reminded as I looked at the TV coverage, that field house will hold all 4,600 midshipmen seated in the stands at once. They have to put some chairs down on the floor as well. But the thing holds a lot of people.

Close to 5,000 people can fit in that facility indoors. That's where they have graduation on rainy days instead of going outdoors to the Navy Marine Corps Memorial Stadium. Well, the president was in there and they scanned the cameras around and you could see these tiers and levels of bleachers going up.

I remember working out, running up and down those steps. It's a great workout. You can map a little route and go up and down and you run around the track for a while and then you go up and down steps.

I've never been in that good of shape since because I never found such a great place to run, come rain or shine. But I often thought, you know, if somebody blew this place up, you could wipe out close to 5,000 people in one sitting. And you get a visual picture.

You can say, well, a quarter of these people, that's a thousand people. And unless you look at a crowd, you look at a football stadium or look at some gathering, you don't really realize how many a thousand is. A thousand is a whopping lot of people.

It's ten groups of a hundred people. And that's how many Belchasser has got in this big palatial feasting area. It's huge.

He drank wine in the presence of the thousand. Now, this just sounds like some minor detail. What does it mean to drink wine in the presence of the thousand? This is a formal ceremonial type of thing.

He is at the head table. All the thousand people look up and he's the master of ceremonies. He gives the initial toast.

This is a feat. This is a look at me, aren't I great get together for Belchasser. This comes right

after chapter four.

We talked about the interval of time that has passed. This is thirty odd years, perhaps, after the previous chapter. Forty odd years.

It's a long time after. Nebuchadnezzar is dead and gone. His son, evil Merodach, is dead and gone.

And this is a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar through Nebuchadnezzar's daughter. Second daughter. A long time has passed.

While he tasted the wine, Belchasser gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels, which his father, actually his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. Drinking wine in the presence of the thousand, he's strutting. He's parading his wealth, his affluence, his power.

He's making an issue of himself. And he wants to talk to himself. He's not just going to drink the wine.

He's going to drink it out of the temple vessels. So they bring the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God, which had been in Jerusalem. The king and his lords, his wives and his concubines drank from them.

They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. What's stamped on all of these vessels? Holy to the Lord. Holy to the Lord.

The things that belong to God, have been dedicated to God, were built out of resources provided by God, by men, inspired by God, are in the hands of the pagans. Can you think of another time when this situation sort of prevailed? Remember in 1 Samuel, when Hophni and Phinehas brazenly took the Ark of the Covenant out in a battle they weren't supposed to fight. They lost it and it went to the Philistines.

And the Philistines took charge of the most precious item in the whole inventory of holy things, the Ark of the Covenant itself. And at the point that they parked that thing in the temple of Dagon, they began to suffer. And their suffering just goes up and up and up.

Well, this was sort of a breaking point of the power of the Philistines. And here is the breaking point of the power of Babylon. And the Babylonian Empire is going to go out here, just as the Philistines are going to have their power broken by Saul and David, especially David in the army of Saul.

He is going to crush the Philistines. And it is on the heels of this taking of the Ark. God says, Philistines, you're finished.

You've had it. No more of this. Same thing here.

Gold vessels that drank wine praised the gods of gold. In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace. And the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

Now, people get the DTs and see spiders crawling up their leg and things like this, but this wasn't delirium tremens. This is an actual supernatural manifestation. God has complete control of the laws of physics.

He wants to make a hand, a disembodied hand appear. And it's actually just a portion of a man's hand. You just see the fingers.

You don't see the arm. You don't see the rest of the body. It is as though in the fabric of space-time, God says to Michael, for example, go down there and scratch something in the plaster of the wall in Belshazzar's palace.

And so he just reaches through the fabric of space-time here, just his hand, and just writes it with his finger. Doesn't use a pen. Doesn't use a chisel.

They had a little three-pointed stylus that they used to make cuneiform writing, but this is not cuneiform, which was in use at the time. We had the tablets. This is in Aramaic.

It's a script. And he writes in Aramaic, as we'll see when we get on down. So the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, and the joints of his hips were loosened, and his knees knocked against each other.

The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, chaldeans, and soothsayers. This is the third time now in the Book of Daniel that we have seen supernatural revelation followed by a call for the chaldeans, astrologers, and soothsayers. Every single time the chaldeans, astrologers, and soothsayers are clueless and helpless and worthless.

And every single time it is Daniel who comes in and gives the meaning and the interpretation. We've already talked about the fact that Belshazzar's father is the actual king at this time, the son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar. He's away trying to stave off the Persians, unsuccessfully as it turns out.

The prince regent, Belshazzar, is the acting king, and so he's called the king here. But he himself is second in the kingdom. And so the promise that he makes is that whoever reads this writing and tells the interpretation shall be clothed with purple, have a chain of gold around his neck, and he shall be third ruler in the kingdom.

He can't be second because he'd have to take Belshazzar's place. The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, said, O king, live forever.

Do not let your thoughts trouble you. Do not let your countenance change. There is a man in

your kingdom, etc., etc.

And I think this queen is actually his mother, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, who is old enough and has been around long enough to know about Daniel, where Belshazzar, the upstart young guy, doesn't know or wasn't paying attention. Daniel is brought in before the king. Verse 13, the king spoke and said to Daniel, Are you that Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father, the king, brought from Judah? I have heard of you that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.

Now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me that they should read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing. And I have heard of you that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple, chain of gold around your neck, third ruler in the kingdom.

Daniel answered and said before the king, Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Yet I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. This would be, in a sense, a demotion for Daniel.

He's already been second ruler in the kingdom. He is effectually and served for many years as Nebuchadnezzar's second highest in the land. He occupied the position that Joseph as vizier in Egypt did.

So when Belshazzar says, I'll make you third in the kingdom and give you a neat necklace and a robe, I mean, not only is Daniel honoring God by saying keep your gifts for yourself, not only does Daniel know that those gifts are going to be pretty temporary because Belshazzar's got about one more day as king, but Daniel's already been there and done that. Daniel's getting up there in years by now. Remember, if he was, say, 15 at the time that Nebuchadnezzar took him, well, 43 years until Nebuchadnezzar passes away, or 40 years, that would make Daniel 55.

And then you have evil Merodach and all the rest of it. So when Daniel is up, say, his 80s, pushing 90 at this time, what's he going to do with a robe and a necklace and being third in the kingdom? He doesn't need it. So he says, keep it, give it to yourself, give it to somebody else.

But I will reveal the writing. O king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. And because of the majesty that he gave him, all people's nations and languages trembled and feared before him.

Whomever he wished, he executed. Whomever he wished, he kept alive. Whomever he wished, he set up.

And whomever he wished, he put down. But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne and they took his glory from him. He was driven from the sons of men.

His heart was made like that of beasts and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till he knew that the most high God rules in the kingdom of men and appoints over it whomever he chooses. That is a quote from Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4. Daniel is quoting this, probably from memory, some 25, 30 years after the fact.

You, his son Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all of this. And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of his house before you.

And you and your lords, your wives and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know. And the God who holds your breath in his hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.

Then the fingers of the hand were sent from him. And this writing was written. And this is the inscription that was written.

Mene, mene, tekel ufarsin. This is the interpretation of each word. Mene, God has numbered your kingdom and finished it.

And that has repeated. It's repeated twice. This word, you may or may not have a footnote in your Bible there, is related to the word mina.

But it's also related to the Aramaic word for numbering. And, of course, this would be sort of inscrutable to people who are looking at the consonantal text. There were no vowel points.

You just had M-N-H. God has numbered your kingdom and finished it. Tekel.

Tekel, again, depending on the context. You know, these words without context are difficult to figure out. I was reading about modern Hebrew and about how it is not pointed.

If you get a Jerusalem Post, it's just a string of Hebrew consonants. Well, how do you know what a word is? You figure it out from context. And if you take a word out of its context, you don't know if it's the verb form or the noun form.

You have to have the sentence to be able to deduce it. And in some cases, they will actually point even modern Hebrew, because otherwise the meaning will not be clear, even from context. So rare and unusual words, you'll find them pointed even in modern Hebrew, but it's rare.

Usually it's just a string of consonants. Well, here you just have these isolated words in Aramaic with no context. So what does it mean? Is it the verb? Is it the noun? Does it mean to count? Does it mean money? What does it mean? Same thing with tekem here.

It can be either a verb or a noun. Daniel knows that these are actions by God. God has counted.

God has evaluated. God has weighed the kingdom of Babylon and the balances and found it wanting. Upharsin is from Perez.

Perez, even in ancient Hebrew. Remember, Perez means to break through, to tear something, to violate it, to rip it. Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the Persians.

Well, there was no disputing that this was the meaning of the words. Evidently, Belshazzar says, well, how do I know that what you say is right? He recognizes the truth of it. And he awards Daniel the robe and the necklace and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be third ruler in the kingdom.

But that very night, Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about 62 years old. Once again, as we have seen in reviewing Nebuchadnezzar this morning, as we see in the echo of his pride and his hubris in Belshazzar, we have a responsibility to the sovereignty of God.

We have a responsibility to acknowledge it, to respect it, to make it a part of our thinking, whether we're in an area of prosperity, whether we're in an area of adversity. Remember, at this time, the people of Judah are still in captivity. The people to whom Ezekiel preaches down by the river Kabar are still there.

And their children are still there. Daniel is still there. The people of God are learning what God speaks over and over again.

Then they shall know that I am the Lord. The Babylonians are going to learn it. They're in a position of prosperity.

The Israelites are going to learn it. They're in a period of adversity. Whether we are blessed, whether we are challenged, our first responsibility is to heed the first commandment.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and all your strength. That is the basis upon which we can love one another, which is the consistent... How many one anothers are there in the New Testament? It's just there are dozens and dozens of times, but there's no power and there's no ability to treat one another as we should, to have the discernment to know when to speak and when to be silent, when to put others ahead of ourselves, without love for God. It's key.

It's all important. And God has highlighted that in Daniel chapter 4 and Daniel chapter 5. It doesn't matter what you attain. It doesn't matter what you achieve.

It doesn't matter what you control. Everything has to be done to the praise and glory of the Lord. Everything.

Doing the dishes, sweeping the floor, getting dressed, doing our work, chatting in conversations. We'll all be doing this over the holidays. Does the light of God shine forth from

us or is it under a bushel? Here are the consequences if we fail.

Here are the consequences if we forget. Nebuchadnezzar gets chastised and recovers. And God restores even more majesty and glory to him.

And that's what he's going to do with his own people. Belshazzar, on the other hand, is like the Pharaoh of the Exodus. He just doesn't get it.

And he's destroyed and wiped out. Those are the options God has where we are concerned. How are we going to respond? How are we going to act? Well, that's a little challenge for the holidays.

We'll pick up our study in Daniel chapter 6 next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us, guide us, lead us into all truth.

May we grow in grace and knowledge of our Savior through these things. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.