

# 119

## MINISTRIES

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### **The Exiled Prophet, Part 5: The Felling of the Great Tree (Daniel 4)**

Welcome back to our study on the book of Daniel. In chapter 3, King Nebuchadnezzar set up a huge image, and demanded that all of his officials bow down to it. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the image, and Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into a furnace. However, God saved them, not allowing them to be burned in the fire, and Nebuchadnezzar ended up glorifying God.

In this teaching, we’re going to cover Daniel chapter 4. In chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream about a huge tree. The tree is cut down, and its stump takes on the mind of a beast. Daniel interprets the dream for the king, declaring that Nebuchadnezzar is the tree. The dream comes true, and Nebuchadnezzar goes mad and acts like an animal for a period of time. He later returns to his right mind, acknowledges and blesses God, and has his kingship restored to him.

The first thing we notice about this chapter is that it is written in Nebuchadnezzar’s voice. It reads like a proclamation written by the king himself, intended to be read all over the world. Here is how it starts:

#### **Daniel 4:1-3**

**King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.**

These first three verses are found in the Aramaic copies of chapter 4, but interestingly, they are not found in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of Daniel (Robert Henry Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929), pp. 79-80). These verses indicate that this chapter was originally a letter intended to be read by Nebuchadnezzar’s entire kingdom. Since this chapter is presented from Nebuchadnezzar’s perspective, it reveals a lot about the king’s personal journey in acknowledging God.

#### **Daniel 4:4**

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace.

As we mentioned in our teaching on chapter 3, there was a time that Nebuchadnezzar had to deal with a rebellion, where he was attacked inside of his own palace (Shea, William H., "Daniel 3: Extra-Biblical Texts and the Convocation on the Plain of Dura." *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* 20.1 (1982) pp. 30-31). So, this declaration that he was at ease in his house, and prospering in his palace indicates that this was probably some time after that rebellion; this happened at a time when the people were content with Nebuchadnezzar's rule. The king was in no danger of being overthrown, and his kingdom was prospering. However, he had a frightening dream:

#### **Daniel 4:5-7**

I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation.

This sounds very similar to the situation in chapter 2, where Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream, and his wise men were unable to interpret the dream for him. After their failure, the king calls Daniel in:

#### **Daniel 4:8-9**

At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream, saying, “O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation.

So, Daniel arrives again to provide the interpretation that the Babylonian wise men cannot. Nebuchadnezzar's petition to Daniel is interesting, and it reveals some things about the king's theology. After Daniel interpreted his dream back in chapter 2, the king said this:

#### **Daniel 2:47**

The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.”

Then, after seeing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego delivered from the fiery furnace, the king said this:

#### **Daniel 3:28-29**

...“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.”

So, Nebuchadnezzar knows that Daniel's god is real, and that he exerts real supernatural influence on the world, but here in chapter 4, he still does not acknowledge YHWH as the only god, or even as the

ultimate god. He says that Daniel has “the spirit of the holy gods” in him (Daniel 4:9). So, it seems that Nebuchadnezzar sees YHWH as just one of the “holy gods,” not the holy God. This explains why he still consults with the Babylonian wise men after their failure to interpret his dream back in chapter 2. Since, in the king’s mind, these wise men represent “holy gods” too, perhaps they stand a chance of being useful to him. Of course, they are not; since God is the one who gave the dream to the king, only God’s messenger to the king—Daniel—will be able to provide the dream’s interpretation. Now that Daniel is standing before Nebuchadnezzar, the king describes his dream:

#### **Daniel 4:10-18**

The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it. I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. He proclaimed aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. Let his mind be changed from a man’s, and let a beast’s mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.’ This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because 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 gods is in you.

There are a lot of interesting details in this dream, and we will get into those details when Daniel interprets the dream for the king starting in verse 19. For now, we are going to focus on the term “watcher” that is used in verses 13 and 17. This word, in Aramaic, is pronounced *ir* (sounds like “ear”), and it is not used anywhere else in the Scriptures, nor has it been found in any of the apocryphal writings. It has been claimed that the term is used in the apocryphal book of Jubilees, because the English translation of that book uses the term “watchers” (see *Jubilees* 4:23), but we do not have any Aramaic copies of Jubilees, so there are no examples of that book using the term *ir*. It has also been claimed that the word *ir* is used in Aramaic fragments of 1 Enoch, but it actually does not appear in any of the fragments that have been found. The word *ir* was added to a reconstruction of Enoch’s text by translators (J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976] p. 144), and it seems that they added the term specifically so that the text would resemble this portion of Daniel. So, there are no original documents that use the term *ir* in the same way that Daniel does. Also, it appears that the authors of the Septuagint, the oldest Greek translation of the Old Testament, may not have known what this term *ir* meant, because in their translation of Daniel, they did not translate the word into Greek; they chose instead to transliterate it. That is to say, the Greek copy of Daniel doesn’t say “watcher” in it; it just says “ir.”

So then, what does this word, typically translated “watchers,” really mean? Some have suggested that perhaps the term is a reference to a Babylonian concept of a council of star-gods that sent messengers to earth (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* ii. 30), and this is what Nebuchadnezzar thought he was seeing. However, we don’t have reliable evidence that the Babylonians even believed in such a thing. It is possible that the Babylonians had a belief like this, but the only historian who claimed that they did

wrote hundreds of years after Babylon had ceased to exist, and we now know for a fact, that he got some other details very wrong about the historical Babylon (For example, in the same passage where he asserts this star-god claim, he also claims that the Chaldeans referred to these stars as names used of the Greek gods, and that the Chaldeans did not believe that the world had a beginning. Neither of these are true; the Babylonians had their own gods with Babylonian names, and their own creation stories—proof of both is in the ancient Babylonian text, *Enuma Elish*). The Babylonians did associate stars with their gods (e.g., in the *MUL.APIN*), and they did believe that they could predict the future based on the motion of the stars and planets; however, Babylonian texts don't give any indication that they believed that messengers were sent to earth from a divine star-council. So, the exact definition of this term *ir* is a bit of a mystery. However, we can get some clues about what it is referring to by the other term that is used in this verse: *holy one*.

### **Daniel 4:13**

...behold, a watcher, a **holy one**, came down from heaven.

“Holy one” is usually a reference to YHWH (Hosea 11:9; Habakkuk 3:3; Proverbs 9:10; Job 6:10; 1 John 2:20; Revelation 16:5), but it can also refer to men (Numbers 16:7; Psalm 106:16), or to heavenly beings that are not God (see Job 15:14-16; Psalm 89:5-7). These heavenly beings seem to be what is in view here in Daniel 4. The term is also used in Daniel 8:

### **Daniel 8:13-14**

Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another **holy one** said to the one who spoke, “For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?” And he said to me, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.”

What is helpful for us here is that one of these “holy ones” is given a name in the next few verses:

### **Daniel 8:15-17**

When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, “Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.” So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, “Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end.

This Gabriel is called an “angel” in the book of Luke (Luke 1:19, 26). Angels are also depicted elsewhere in Scripture doing the same thing that the watcher, the *ir*, does in Daniel 4: they come down from heaven and declare prophetic words to people. Here is an example from the book of Revelation:

### **Revelation 18:1-3**

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. And he called out with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.”

So, whatever the term *ir* may mean, it seems that it is a reference to an angel, a heavenly messenger like

Gabriel.

Getting back to Daniel chapter 4, the king had a vision of a magnificent tree, and then a watcher, a holy one, an angel told him that this tree was going to be chopped down, and that its stump would become like a beast. After the king told this vision to Daniel, here was Daniel's reaction:

#### **Daniel 4:19-22**

Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, "Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies! The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived— it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth.

Here we see the interpretation of some of the elements of this dream. The tree itself is King Nebuchadnezzar (v. 22). The tree grew and became strong (v. 20), meaning that Nebuchadnezzar's political power grew and became solidified. The tree's top reached heaven (v. 20). This phrase is used in several scriptures, and it typically refers to having great visibility, or great fame (e.g., Job 20:4-9). Interestingly, the phrase is used in other places that are also referring to Babylon:

#### **Genesis 11:4**

Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower **with its top in the heavens**, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

#### **Isaiah 14:4, 13-14**

...take up this taunt against the king of Babylon... You said in your heart, '**I will ascend to heaven**; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

So, in addition to great fame, the idea of a top reaching heaven is also usually an indication of great pride; it indicates a person who is trying to in some way compete with God. This pride seems to be the reason that Nebuchadnezzar is receiving this warning.

In addition to a top reaching to heaven, the tree had beautiful leaves and abundant fruit. "**Beautiful leaves**" is not a phrase used anywhere else in the Scriptures, but the implication seems to be that this king had glory, that others were impressed by him. Fruit frequently represents righteousness in the scriptures (e.g., Psalm 1; Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 1:10-11), but in this case, another interpretation seems to be more likely. This tree's fruit "**was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived.**" (Daniel 4:21). The "beasts of the field" and "birds of the heavens" are often depicted in the scriptures as eating the carcasses of warriors who have been slain (Psalm 78:1-3; Ezekiel 39:17-20). So, if the tree, the king, is feeding the "beasts of the field" and the "birds of the heavens" with fruit instead of fallen warriors, this seems to indicate that he is keeping peace in his kingdom.

Historically, Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom did have great glory and prosperity. In fact, he was one of the

most successful kings in history. When his father, Nabopolassar, was king, Nebuchadnezzar commanded the Babylonian army, and expanded the territory of his father's kingdom (see the *Jerusalem Chronicle* (a.k.a. Babylonian Chronicle ABC 5, [www.livius.org](http://www.livius.org)); see also Jeremiah 46:1-26). Once he became king, he built up both the city and the kingdom of Babylon to its most powerful and glorious position ever. As author Ted Noel describes it:

Babylon was a place of wonders that the Greek historian Herodotus said “surpasses in splendor any city in the known world.” In the forty-three years of his rule, Nebuchadnezzar went on a building spree of monumental proportions. He enlarged the city greatly, building miles of walls. Archeologists have found impressive palaces, temples, and statues. The streets were paved with asphalt, and the walls were covered with beautiful carvings. He built hanging gardens that were one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

- Noel, Ted, *A Primer on the Book of Daniel*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), p. 40

Archaeologists have unearthed some of the things that Nebuchadnezzar had built, and it turns out that Herodotus was not exaggerating. Nebuchadnezzar's city was full of splendor. It seems, though, that the king was allowing these great achievements to go to his head, so God sent a dream to get his attention.

#### **Daniel 4:23-26**

And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,’ this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules.

The description of the tree indicates how glorious the king was, but here we see that he will be made to “eat grass like an ox.” This is not a glorious state, and we see that expressed by the use of the phrase in other scriptures as well:

#### **Psalms 106:20**

They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass.

This is a fitting fall from glory for the one who is building his top to heaven in order to make a name for himself, who is taking credit for the works of God. The king is being reduced from his “godlike” status to the status of an animal. He is no more a real god than a molten image is.

#### **Daniel 4:27**

Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.

This is very common prophetic advice to rulers of nations. God’s judgment is coming because they have oppressed the people under their rule; but if they repent, that judgment may be averted. Here are some examples of this same message being delivered by other prophets:

**Isaiah 1:16-20**

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause. “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD [YHWH]: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD [YHWH] has spoken.

**Ezekiel 45:9**

Thus says the Lord GOD [YHWH]: Enough, O princes of Israel! Put away violence and oppression, and execute justice and righteousness. Cease your evictions of my people, declares the Lord GOD [YHWH].

**Jeremiah 5:27-29**

Like a cage full of birds, their houses are full of deceit; therefore they have become great and rich; they have grown fat and sleek. They know no bounds in deeds of evil; they judge not with justice the cause of the fatherless, to make it prosper, and they do not defend the rights of the needy. Shall I not punish them for these things? declares the LORD [YHWH], and shall I not avenge myself on a nation such as this?”

In the case of Nebuchadnezzar, what “oppression” was he inflicting that Daniel advised him to correct? We don’t know, historically, of any particular policies of Nebuchadnezzar that were especially oppressive in his kingdom, but we do know some things about his character. He threatened his advisors with death in chapter 2, and he threatened to burn alive anyone who refused to bow to the image he made in chapter 3. It’s clear that he could be hot-headed, and that he was very harsh with people who got on his bad side. That harshness probably came through in some of his national policies, which would likely result in injustice and oppression.

**Daniel 4:28-32**

All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, and the king answered and said, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?” While the words were still in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.

Nebuchadnezzar’s words here are striking for several reasons. “By my mighty power” is, of course, the most telling part of Nebuchadnezzar’s boast. He believes that he is special; that he is uniquely deserving of his kingly position, because of his great power, and his marvelous deeds. The main lesson that God is about to teach him is that he is just a man like any other, and it is only by God’s favor that he has anything to boast about at all.

The other interesting piece of Nebuchadnezzar's boast is that he says that Babylon was built "as a royal residence, and for the glory of my majesty." Nebuchadnezzar was very religious, and he built many things for the glory and honor of the gods of Babylon. This is why temples were built: they were "residences" for the gods, and their lavish furnishings were there to bring the gods glory. Here, Nebuchadnezzar is admitting that his beautification of the city was not just to bring glory to the gods, but also to himself.

While the individual projects within the city may be for the glory of individual gods, the sum of the projects in the city was for the glory of the king. In fact, we know from archaeological finds that the king was so dedicated to this self-glorification project that he had the bricks that were used for construction throughout the city stamped with his own name (Bryan Windle, "Nebuchadnezzar: An Archaeological Biography", Bible Archaeology Report, October 17, 2019, biblearchaeologyreport.com). He was exalting himself as though he were God. But God showed him what the truth of the situation was; the king was no God at all.

### **Daniel 4:33**

Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

This is an unusual punishment given to Nebuchadnezzar, and it seems custom tailored to teach him a particular lesson. Not only is he being shown that he is not God, but he is also learning something about being a man; that just like an animal, his time on earth is limited, and all of the glory he has amassed for himself will not last. Other scriptures teach this lesson also:

### **Ecclesiastes 3:18-20**

I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts. For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return.

### **Psalms 49:16-20**

Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases. For when he dies he will carry nothing away; his glory will not go down after him. For though, while he lives, he counts himself blessed—and though you get praise when you do well for yourself—his soul will go to the generation of his fathers, who will never again see light. Man in his pomp yet without understanding is like the beasts that perish.

So, then, did the king learn from this experience? Did God's lesson sink in? It seems very much like it did:

### **Daniel 4:34-35**

At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason 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 endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"

Nebuchadnezzar finally acknowledges God's sovereignty; that God is in charge of everything. His words echo those of the Psalms:

**Psalm 135:5-6**

For I know that the LORD [YHWH] is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the LORD [YHWH] pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.

This phrasing also brings to mind Yeshua's prayer in Matthew 6:

**Matthew 6:10**

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Now that Nebuchadnezzar had learned his lesson, and acknowledged that ultimately, his kingdom belongs to God, the final part of the dream comes to pass, and the king gets his kingdom back:

**Daniel 4:36-37**

At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Now the king's words sound like the words of a prophet or an apostle:

**Isaiah 2:11-12**

The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD [YHWH] alone will be exalted in that day. For the LORD [YHWH] of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low.

**James 4:13-17**

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

So, after receiving dreams and interpretations from God, after seeing God miraculously protect his faithful servants from a blazing fire, and after having God reduce him to the state of an animal, Nebuchadnezzar finally realizes that God is in charge. He sees that Daniel's God is greater than the gods of Babylon, and most of all, God is greater than the king himself. Even though Nebuchadnezzar was, for all intents and purposes, the king of the world, God was the true king. Nebuchadnezzar only had his position by God's permission.

**Power and Pride**

What can we learn from this story in Daniel chapter 4? This chapter emphasizes that God is sovereign; he is greater than the greatest kings that have ever lived. There are two lessons that we can take away

from this. First, we can take comfort in knowing that no matter how powerful or how evil any man or group of men may be, God is good, and he is above them all. As Yeshua said:

### **Matthew 10:26-31**

...have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And **do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul**. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

We can rest assured that God has everything under control, and that everything really is in his hands. We can serve God with full assurance that if we are faithful to him, he will be faithful to us (see Matthew 10:32-33).

The second lesson we can take away from this story has to do with our own pride, our own attitude toward God. Very few of us will ever be in a position like Nebuchadnezzar, where we have authority over much of the known world. However, we can still learn from Nebuchadnezzar's mistake; if God was greater than Nebuchadnezzar, then he is also greater than us. We should not revel in our accomplishments as though we gained them entirely by our own efforts. We should acknowledge that it is by God's favor that we have the health, the physical strength, the intellect, and the very breath in our lungs that enables us to do anything at all. As Moses said:

### **Deuteronomy 8:17-18**

Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the LORD [YHWH] your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

So, not only does this story teach us not to fear those who seem to have great power, but also to be humble and grateful for the power and resources that we have. God is the one to whom all power truly belongs, so whatever power we have, we ought to use for God's purposes.

In the next teaching in this series, we will examine chapter 5 of the book of Daniel. We hope to see you there.

*We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything.*

*Shalom!*

*For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

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