

Daniel 4:1-37

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[0 : 00] Please take your copy of God's Word and turn to Daniel chapter 4.!

The second theme is the immovable sovereignty of God.

And this is often seen in juxtaposition to the rise and the fall of man, and it is seen by God's hand.

We will see today that it is God who does the raising up and the bringing low.

And thirdly, we'll see time and time again the resilient faith of Daniel and his friends in a hostile culture. Now, I'll say this theme is not well developed in this chapter of the book.

It's a lesser theme, but we will see that Daniel is still serving in the court, and he is still willing to speak on behalf of God. So Daniel chapter 4, beginning at verse 1, before I read, beloved, let me remind you that this is God's Word to us.

[1 : 31] It's inspired, it's authoritative, it's sufficient. And it was written for his glory and our good. And so we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Daniel chapter 4, beginning in verse 1. 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.

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. 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, and that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in.

[2 : 39] And I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation. At last Daniel came in before me. He who was named Beltegar after the name of my God, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.

And I told him the dream, saying, O Beltegar, 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.

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 spread 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 top off its branches.

[3 : 47] 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 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 Beltegar, 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. Then Daniel, whose name was Beltegar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him.

[4 : 52] The king answered and said, Beltegar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you. Beltegar 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 which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and 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.

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.

[6 : 09] 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. 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. 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.

[7 : 14] 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.

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 an eagle's feathers, and his nails were like bird's claws.

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?

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.

[8 : 22] 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.

All right. We have about 30 minutes to cover the content. Of this text. Before we do, before we get into the meat of it and the driving point of it, I want to deal with the first three verses and consider how they relate to the last 34.

Now there's two explanations of this. I'm going to give you the first one, which I think is a probable explanation of it, and that is that it's a precursor, it's an introduction to the rest of the story that he's in advance saying, here's the thing I intend to tell you, and then he launches into this story. It's very possible that this is the meaning of it. However, I'd like to suggest to you the more unpopular opinion, which I always hate when I hold the more unpopular opinion, and that is that the first three verses of chapter four actually belong with the end of chapter three, which is the story that we studied last week there, and I'm going to do that for a couple of reasons.

Number one, the medieval translation places these verses, verses one through three, at the end of chapter three. So once upon a time, this was the case. They were chapter three, verse 31 through 34, and it was Martin Luther who changed the chapter and verse break to have chapter three end with verse 30.

[9 : 59] Now we know that chapter and verse breaks are not inspired. There's a good example of that. It was changed, so we're left with the task of figuring out how these stories carry along together.

But I think it belongs with the story at the end of chapter three, the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the great idol in the plain that they were asked to worship and thrown into the fiery furnace as a result, because it contains in it a familiar phrase found in the beginning of chapter three.

You see this in chapter three, verse four, people's nations and languages. So part of the command to bow down to this idol was that the people's nations and languages would do so.

And then this to me seems to kind of cap off what happens there. First, he gives a decree, verse 29 of chapter three, that no one would speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And then I suggest to you that he speaks in favor of that God. He says to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied to you.

[11 : 06] It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders 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, right?

So placing these three verses at the beginning of chapter four connects it to the rest of chapter four, and I think it makes Nebuchadnezzar seem a bit like a crazy person.

You may have experienced this in your reading of the book of Daniel, that he just seems so back and forth. But I think what we see at the very beginning of chapter four, and I'm arguing should be the end of chapter three, I think we're actually witnessing Nebuchadnezzar's conversion.

Notice the progression of things that he has said about Yahweh, about our God, the God of Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. In chapter two and verse 47, he says 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 he's talking about the interpretation of his dream.

So your God is God of gods and Lord of kings. Chapter three, verse 29, I mentioned, 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.

[12 : 38] For there is no other God who is able to rescue in this way. So again, the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But then in chapter four, verse two, he says, it has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the most high God has done for me.

It seems that he has come to know this God. And I'm suggesting to you that it's because of the occasion that happened on the plain of Dura with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Again, that we are observing the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar II. Now, quite frankly, either way you argue it, it's okay with me. But let me go a little further.

Note that I referred to him as Nebuchadnezzar II. This is the Nebuchadnezzar the Great, who is the prominent historical Nebuchadnezzar. He was named after his grandfather and was the ruler under which Babylon became a great empire.

Typically, when you hear Nebuchadnezzar reference, this is the Nebuchadnezzar that's being referred to. Upon his death, he was succeeded by his son, Amel Marduk, who was such a terrible ruler that he was murdered by his brother-in-law, Negal Sherazer, who ruled four years before his death.

[14 : 02] He was succeeded by his son, Labashi Marduk, who was another inept ruler. So he was assassinated after a nine-month rule and replaced with a man named Nabonidus.

Now, this is extra-biblical but historical fact as far as history can be understood as factual. The Babylonians kept great historical records and this is the record that we're shown.

Now, Nabonidus, in order to establish some sense of legitimacy, renamed himself Nebuchadnezzar III. He took on that name.

Of interesting historical note, this is an aside, but when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, he referred to himself as Nebuchadnezzar II simply because he didn't know his history well enough to know that Nebuchadnezzar II was not Nebuchadnezzar I.

He was actually Nebuchadnezzar IV in that case. But in order to establish legitimacy, he was hearkening back to that Babylonian king the same way that Nabonidus was doing.

[15:11] Now, Nabonidus was succeeded by his son whose name was Balthazar. Nope. His name was Balthazar of chapter 5.

There's no historical record that Nebuchadnezzar II had a son named Belshazzar. But there is a record that Nebuchadnezzar III had a son named Belshazzar.

Now, Daniel 5, 2a reads, Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar, his father, had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought. And this has confused many people. And there's a lot of criticism of the book of Daniel because it doesn't line up with the historical record. Critics of the scripture used this argument to say this is not inspired.

How could it be? It doesn't reconcile with the historical record. But the word translated his father in our English translations could also be translated his predecessor.

[16:11] So the Nebuchadnezzar that came before him. And that's very easily resolved. So this brings me to my second unpopular opinion. I don't know how many of you listen to podcasts or audio books, but do you ever listen to it at like one and a half speed?

I feel like that's what I'm doing right now. For the sake of time. I hope you're hanging with me. My second unpopular opinion is this. That the Nebuchadnezzar of chapter 4 verses 4 through 37 is Nebuchadnezzar the third, not Nebuchadnezzar the second.

Different Nebuchadnezzars. I'm going to give you a couple of arguments to this end and then I'll tell you why it matters at all. Why it matters a little bit. Number one, I've been really geeking out over the past two weeks over this.

The Nebuchadnezzar of 4, 4 through 37 has a dream, right? We see him having a dream. We know that Nebuchadnezzar has had another dream back in chapter 2.

But this time, or this man, doesn't call Daniel alone to interpret the dream, but instead issues a decree. This is verse 6 and 7, that the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they would make known the interpretation.

[17:25] So verse 7 says, the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, the astrologers. We've seen this happen before in chapter 2. Why would the Nebuchadnezzar of chapter 2 call the same people who were unable to help him with that dream?

If you recall in chapter 2, he wasn't even willing to tell them the dream because he thought they would just trick him. They would come up with some interpretation and it may or may not be. He wanted them to tell him the dream and they couldn't.

And Daniel comes on the scene and is able to do so. So why would this Nebuchadnezzar do what he did? It doesn't make any sense that he has forgotten everything that happened the last time he had a dream and doesn't just call Daniel.

Like, hey, Daniel, you're still in my court. You're the guy that interprets dreams. Secondly, the Nebuchadnezzar of 4, 4 through 37 does not seem to know the God of Daniel.

We've seen in chapter 2 and in chapter 3, I'm arguing the beginning of chapter 4, some expression that he does know this God of Daniel. He knows that Daniel worships a single God.

[18:38] in verses 8 and 9 of chapter 4, this Nebuchadnezzar refers to the spirit of the holy gods that he believes are in Daniel.

It's like he's heard a rumor that Daniel has this spirit and this ability, but he doesn't actually know where to locate its source. It doesn't make a lot of sense.

How do we reconcile this with the Nebuchadnezzar of chapter 2's statement, verse 47? Again, truly your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.

He goes from that grand statement in chapter 2 to I've heard you have these holy gods that dwell in you. Third, in chapter 4 in verse 30, this Nebuchadnezzar says, is not this great Babylon which I have built by my piety power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty.

Right? So many argue that this must be Nebuchadnezzar II, but Nebuchadnezzar II didn't build Babylon. He just built it to its prominence.

[19 : 55] He built it up so possibly this is what he's saying. I have made it what it now is. However, when Nebuchadnezzar III took the throne, he decided to build a new palace and a new capital city in a place called Temmah.

If my memory is serving me right, about 60 miles south of the prominent Nebuchadnezzar II, Babylon, and it was renamed Babylon.

It became the new Babylon there. fourth, there's no historical record of Nebuchadnezzar II disappearing for seven years.

Seven periods, the text says. In fact, there are many records indicating that he was present and active for the entirety of his reign.

There's documentation that is still in the account. Now, it's possible that that was fabricated, that it's kind of a cover-up. We don't want anybody to think that our king was insane for seven years.

[20 : 58] Very possible explanation to that. But, this doesn't reconcile with the attitude of the Nebuchadnezzar of chapter 4. The very last verse, he says, 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.

It would seem that he would want it to be known of this God. This God had humbled him and in this way. When Nebuchadnezzar III moved the capital to Timah and called it Babylon, he left at the old capital his son, Belshazzar.

He was left behind in Belshazzar to kind of co-rule with him. And we have records of communication between him and his son, except for a gap in time.

Guess how long the gap in time is? Seven years. There's a silence. And it could be for any other reason. Maybe it was lost, burned up, dropped on a river. I mean, there could be some other reason, but it's so interesting that for seven years there appears to be a silence between Nebuchadnezzar III, Nabodidus, and his son, Belshazzar.

So I think that this Nebuchadnezzar is different from that Nebuchadnezzar of chapters 1 through chapter 4 and verse 3. And so I'm going to call him Nabodidus from now on.

[22 : 31] But why does this matter? Okay, so why? Why did I just spend the first 15 minutes of this in one and a half speed telling you this? I don't think it matters ultimately, right?

So you could just flatly disagree with me and go, not a chance. As I stated, it's the more unpopular opinion of the text. You can still learn the prominent point of chapter 4 and disagree with me on this matter.

But two possible reasons I think it does matter. I mentioned to you already the scholarly argument against the veracity of the Old Testament. This is one of those. Daniel is historically inaccurate. It's very confusing as you try to parse through all of that. How is it that there's a Belshazzar? We have no record of a son named Belshazzar, etc. Those things become problematic in believing that this is in fact the Word of God.

And the Word of God is both inspired and it's an accurate history. So I think it's helpful for us to reconcile these types of things. The other, and I think more important reason that I'm making this case, is that I think it displays for us kind of the manifold mercy of God.

[23 : 39] It seems to me, in my estimation, that it's not just one proud king, one idolatrous king, one oppressive king that God is merciful to, brings to humility, I think brings to salvation, but it's actually two.

That God uses Daniel and his friends and their perseverance, or faithful perseverance, in a hostile culture, to display his grace and mercy.

I think that it's a reverberation of the promise made to Abraham in Genesis chapter 22 and verse 18, in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

So that's how it warms my heart to think, I think this is a different guy, another guy that God is merciful to, another proud man that deserves the condemnation of God and yet is shown his mercy.

So, here's the outline for our study this morning. Three points to develop the last one very brief. First, the prideful rise of Nabonidus.

[24 : 55] You'll have to guess on the spelling. Second, the humbling fall of Nabonidus. And third, the humbling rise.

of Nabonidus. First, the prideful rise. This whole episode in the book of Daniel, all of that language, the repetition is meant to make the point that Nabonidus is told in this dream, this is the point, to the end, this is the last part of verse 17, 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 is the point of all of chapter four, right? Nabonidus is going to be humbled because God is to be known.

Nabonidus had yet to understand that while he was a ruler, his rule was subject to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. he did not know the Most High God and he did not know of his absolute reign.

He was very proud. Recall verses 29 and 30. At the end of 12 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 and as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty.

[26 : 31] So a full year later, maybe he even tried to keep the pride in check for a little while after Daniel's interpretation, but a full year later he has this moment of great pride.

Look at what I have done. Look at my power. Look at my majesty. We can't be sure if anyone was with him on the roof.

Perhaps somebody was. Whether he actually said this out loud or not, but it makes no difference because this was the posture of his heart.

He thought that it was by his might, by his power, by his majesty that he had accomplished these things. You wouldn't say or think such a thing if you did not believe it to be true.

Now it may be easy for us to not find ourselves in the text at this point. None of us are kings. I'm quite sure of that. None of us have built a city.

[27 : 34] I'm quite sure a palace. I'm quite sure of that. Some of our homes are bigger than others, but no palaces. I'm fairly confident. But we should be so careful at this point because we have all been proud like Nabonidus.

Every one of us. We have all given ourselves credit for things that the Lord accomplished. We have said in our hearts, many of us have said out loud, look at my accomplishments.

Look at the game I won. Look at the grades I achieved. Look at the house that I built. Look at the promotion that I earned. Look at the way I look.

Look at the sermon I preach. Look at my power. Look at my majesty. We have all done this in various ways.

Be very careful to not be dismissive of these types of attitudes in your heart. The Lord takes this kind of thing seriously. In Proverbs 16, 5, we read, everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord.

[28 : 47] Be assured he will not go unpunished. This attitude of heart of Nabonidus was before he was humbled.

It was before he knew the Lord. In the last part of verse 32, God tells Nabonidus that he will punish him until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.

God in his great mercy does something severe to Nabonidus so that Nabonidus will know him. He makes him crazy, drives him mad for seven periods, I believe, because of the historical text, seven years.

If you are proud this morning, know that God has the power to drive you mad. He could turn you into a cow so that you might know him.

And it's very possible that he may just do so, but know also that he may have brought you to church, something much more kind, at least I hope you experience it that way, so that you can hear about the madness of Nabonidus, that you will see your own pride and that you will throw yourself on the mercy of God as found in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

[30 : 11] Don't be so proud that God has to drive you mad to bring you to him. Know that he may already be at work in your heart even now to bring you to humility that you might know him.

God in his great mercy did something severe to Jesus Christ by punishing him on the cross so that we can know him, so that we to be brought to God in Christ.

And be assured, if you are not humble now, you will one day be humbled. Jesus, in speaking of the final judgment in Matthew chapter 23, says, whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever

humbles himself will be exalted.

Beloved, those of us who know the Lord have all the more reason to not be proud. All the more. we can't hardly blame Nabonidus for being proud.

He didn't know the Lord. He didn't understand God's majesty, but we do. If we are ever proud, it is because we have forgotten who we once were and what we deserved.

[31 : 23] I ask my boys quite often, what do you deserve? And the answer is death and hell. That's the answer. We should make us so very thankful for the burned grilled cheese.

Right? Praise the Lord. This is not death and hell. It's just slightly burned grilled cheese. We have to have a perspective to understand. When we are proud, we have forgotten who we once were and what we deserve.

We have forgotten that we were wretched rebels and that it would be just, it would be right for God to punish us forever. If we are ever proud, beloved, we should only be proud in our God.

This is the place of boasting for the Christian. Listen to Jeremiah chapter 9 verse 23 and following. Thus says the Lord, let not the wise man boast in his wisdom.

Let not the mighty man boast in his might. Let not the rich man boast in his riches. But let him who boasts boast in this. This is so good.

[32 : 30] That he understands and knows me. That I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.

And I think you could track that backwards. God delights in being steadfast in his love, his justice, and his righteousness. Right? And it's that that we're supposed to understand and to know.

This is the reason for our boasting and nothing else. So that's the prideful rise of Nabonidus.

We also can observe the humbling fall of Nabonidus. Nabonidus loses his mind. Right? And note, it's important for us to see that God is sovereign even over the mind of man.

Nabonidus. The first part of verse 34, at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted my eyes to heaven and my reason returned to me.

[33 : 37] That is to say, he was able to think rightly. And what is it that he thinks? What is it that he now knows that he's able to think rightly? He says in the rest of verse 34 and following, 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 hosts of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

And none can stay his hand or stop what he's doing and say to him, what have you done? What does Nabonidus now know rightly?

That God is worthy of praise and honor and not man. That God is absolute and forever the ruler and not man.

That man is nothing in comparison and is subject to God's reign. That God's sovereignty is immovable.

[34 : 45] And that man doesn't even have the right to question God's rule. What humility. What an expression of humility.

I wonder, are our hearts marked with this measure of humility? Nabonidus has been driven mad. Right? He spent seven years.

He doesn't even seem like he's recognizable any longer. Right? He ate grass. Just think about it. For seven years he lived outside and he ate grass like an ox.

But he does not ask of God. He's not concerned about the quote unquote wasted years of his life. He does not question whether or not this lesson could have been learned in another way.

He does not question God's control or God's goodness. goodness. And I just have to confess, I think I would have. Really, Lord?

[35 : 47] Seven years? It took that? It took me being insane for this long for you to teach me this lesson? Nabonidus accepts it. Apparently it does take this long to teach me this lesson.

It does not question God's control or his goodness. Listen to the final verse of the chapter. 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. He praises him because he's good and he's just and he's in control and because he humbled Nabonidus.

And then we see a restoration, thirdly. The humbling rise of Nabonidus. So now that he's humble, God gives back to him the kingdom.

[36 : 51] It's a worthy note that God is good to his word. It's what he saw in the dreams. What the Holy One told him would happen. So upon his humbling, his kingdom is restored.

Verse 36 says, at the same time my reason returned to me and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. He even says that more greatness was added to him.

Now, we live in a different economy of God's grace. Largely the way that we are blessed now in Christ is through spiritual matters. We are looking to a heavenly reward.

In these days, often the way God blessed his people and others is that he gave them dominion. He gave them possession. He showed that he was for them in the things that they had and we should be careful that we don't learn that lesson from Nabonidus.

Remember Jesus again, Matthew 23 and verse 12. Speaking of final judgment, he says, whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

[38 : 00] He's talking about future glory. The last will be first and the first will be last. I hope that you'll join with me in desiring to be the last so that someday I can be the first so that I will have exaltation even as I have humility here.

And we don't really need to look to the life of Nabonidus or Nebuchadnezzar if you prefer. We have in the Lord Jesus Christ the greatest example of humility.

And so I'll close with a reading from Philippians chapter 2. This is verse 3 and following. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourself which is yours in Christ Jesus who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father let's pray together God