

The Kings Dream

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- [0 : 0 0] Welcome to our service this evening. As we come before God in worship we pray that His blessing be upon His word.
- We can begin our service singing to God's praise from Psalm 65. Psalm 65 from the beginning.
- Praise waits for Thee in Zion, Lord. To Thee vows paid shall be. O Thou that hearer art of prayer, all flesh shall come to Thee.
- Iniquities, I must confess, prevail against me do. But as for our transgressions, then purge away shalt Thou. Blessed is the man whom Thou dost choose, and makest approach to Thee, that he within Thy courts, O Lord, may still a dweller be.
- We surely shall be satisfied with Thy abundant grace, and with the goodness of Thy house, even of Thy holy place. O God of our salvation, Thou in Thy righteousness, by fearful works unto our prayer, Thine answer dost express.
- [1 : 1 5] Therefore the ends of all the earth, and those afar that be upon the sea, their confidence, O Lord, will place in Thee. And so on.
- We can sing these verses, Psalm 65, 1-5. Praise waits for Thee in Zion, Lord. Praise waits for Thee in Zion, Lord.
- To Thee in Zion, Lord. Praise to Thee in Zion, Lord. To Thee in Zion, Lord. To Thee in Zion, Lord. Praise to Thee in Zion, Lord. O Thou that hear that our offer is, all flesh shall come to Thee.
- Iniquities I must confess prevail against me too.
- A doubt for doubt's contrition then part the way to the love.
- [2 : 3 9] Blessed is the man who thou dost choose and makes approach to thee.
- That here in thy course, O Lord, may still not let me.
- We surely shall be satisfied with thy love and grace, and with the goodness of thy hands in all thy holy place.
- O God of our salvation, Thou with thy righteousness by fearful hearts unto affairs, thy master does exist.
- Therefore the ends of all the air, and those of our life be.
- [4 : 3 6] Upon the skin there on which O Lord will praise me.
- Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. Lord, O God in heaven, we give thanks that we can turn our face to you and believe that you will not divert your gaze from us.
- It is at times the fear of your people. That there are sins, as are so many, that that is what will happen.
- That the God of glory will have nothing to do with them. That fear is not a fear that has any right to be in the heart of your people.

It is something that is created in them by the enemy of their soul. Something that they are encouraged to believe against the truth.

[6 : 01] For your word teaches us that your people have a right of access to a throne of grace in and through the person of Jesus Christ the Lord.

And that right is confirmed to us within scripture. And that right is said before us as something that is blood-bought.

And that nothing less than the blood of the eternal Son of God has secured it. And if that be the case, how then could we believe that our God would turn his back upon us?

But nevertheless your word teaches us that if we continue in sin, if we persevere to sin against life, if we continue to remain as we are without God and without Christ in the world, then the day will come that that would be the case for any and all.

And we pray that this would not be the case with regard to any of us who are here this evening under the sound of your word. We give thanks for every opportunity afforded to us to gather in your name, to be under the teaching of your word, to come expectantly, to come hungering and thirsting after righteousness as a mark of your grace.

[7 : 49] We pray that you would bless us together in our gathering, that your spirit would be poured out upon us, even in a measure that would satisfy the longings of our soul.

We bless you and thank you that the day came into the experience of this world when at Pentecost there was an immeasurable quarter of the Spirit's power poured out.

He came in power in the name of Christ, as Christ had given him that remit. We bless you and thank you that in his coming, blessing came in its wake.

And we read of countless, hundreds, perhaps thousands, who heard the gospel for the first time, being blessed under the gospel.

While such days may have departed, nevertheless there have been occasions when there are blessings recorded, where men and women, young and old, submitted to the power of God as it is in Christ Jesus.

[9 : 08] They turned in the way and they sought out salvation for their souls. They cried out, out of a sense of their own grief and sorrow and sadness because of their sin.

They repented of these sins and embraced Christ as he is in the gospel. We give thanks for these accounts that we have in scripture.

These accounts that we have in sacred history, also in secular history, who despite blindness would have nothing to do with that Christ and yet they must record the fact that there were days of power witnessed in the land, even in these islands.

Days of outpouring, days where many came to know the Lord and acknowledge him as their saviour. We crave such days.

We cry out to you for them, knowing that we cannot in any way promote them or bring them upon ourselves, but we can come into the presence of God and seek and seek a token of your mercy that men and women would turn to you and that the gospel that is preached would be blessed even here in our own midst.

[10 : 37] Remember the congregation. Remember those who gather as a congregation. Remember those who form part of the community and who may know nothing of what goes on here.

They see the building, they see people coming and going from the building, but their presence here is never one that is witnessed to, which may seem strange to those of us who have been raised in the community, who have been part or partial of the Christian experience from our youth and we pray that these experiences would not just be experiences that are shallow and empty and without meaning or purpose, but we do remember and bring before you those who are careless and indifferent and negligent and ignorant of the things of God.

We pray for every home and household, every family who lie within the borders of our islands, our nation and beyond.

We are jealous for their souls and we bring them to the God who has given to us the breath of life, who created all men in his own image and who gave man that image in all its fullness, even the soul that lies within the breast and we pray Lord that you would encourage us to understand such a remarkable relation with the God who has created unlike the brute beasts.

We pray Lord that you would remember all the places where Christ is lifted up this evening, every pulpit, every preacher, every congregation that you would visit them in mercy and pour out your spirit upon their gathering so that the world would be fruitful in the lives of those who are under it.

[12 : 53] We remember the congregations that have gathered today to remember the death of Christ until he come and we pray that such remembrances would be fragrant and that such a profession of faith and you in public would be blessed to them and that their interest in Christ would not just be a passing interest but a deep and a meaningful interest even as those who at one point insisted that they would not go any further if Christ would not go with them.

So it may be with us that we would desire for that presence to remain with us in our journey through this world long or short may it be.

We ask that you would remember those who belong to the congregation who are unwell and pray for the elderly those who are frail by reason of the passage of time those who are who are suffering illnesses of various descriptions some of them even terminal illnesses we give thanks for the means that are placed at their disposal by which their suffering is alleviated.

Bless the care homes bless the hospitals bless the hospital and all in it and we pray that you would remember all the endeavours that are made in your day to be the hands and the eyes and the mouth of Christ in the community there are so many things we take for granted but there are so many things we ought to remind ourselves that are the result of the grace of God in the community we pray that you would sanctify all that is done in your name remember Lord the world in which we live our own nation which is lying in desperate need of the pouring of your spirit though secular so intent on furthering ends that have no substance that is of a spiritual worth we pray for a conversion a turning back a repenting of sin even at a national level bless our

Queen and our family bless the parliaments that serve her representing the communities over which she is sovereign remember the nations of the earth all of them with their own need we think of the Ukraine we think of the parts of the world where there are desperate needs brought to our attention occasionally we think of the Yemen we think of Pakistan where there's flooding places that are severing the ravages of famine and many destitute and many weak and infirm who suffer the most so hear our petitions on their behalf and bless the hands of your own people who bring the gospel to them even in the midst of darkness where there are so many vain traditions and so many false religions and yet the gospel of Christ is radiating forth in that darkness may those who have come to know Christ be upheld and kept safe in places where they are bitterly opposed even to the point of death we pray for the persecuted church we pray for those who know what it is to stand up and be counted for

[16 : 44] Christ who are imprisoned or who are vilified because of their confession we ask that you would remember all such so guide us now as we read the word of the most high God your word given to us that we may be accused of it sanctify us in our reading of it in our hearing of it in our contemplation of it grant mercy for our many sins in Jesus precious name we ask Amen I'm going to read from the book of Daniel and we're reading the fourth chapter Daniel chapter four it's a long chapter but I think we can read it all Daniel chapter four Nebuchadnezzar the king unto all people nations and languages that dwell in all the earth peace be multiplied unto you

I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me how great are his signs and how mighty are his wonders his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and his dominion is from generation to generation I never had ideas because the visions of my head troubled me therefore made I a decree to bring all the wise men of Babylon before me that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream then came in the magicians the astrologers the Chaldeans and the Soothsayer.

And I told the dream before them, but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belshazzar, according to the name of my God and in whom is the Spirit of the Holy Gods.

And before him I told the dream, saying, O Belshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy Gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee.

Tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen and the interpretation thereof. Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed. I saw and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.

[19 : 16] The tree grew and was strong, and the height thereof reached into heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all.

The beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed off it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and behold a watcher, and unholy one, come down from heaven.

He cried aloud and said to us, Shew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit. Let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches.

Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth.

Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him, and let seven times pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones, to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

[20 : 44] This dream my king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, for as much as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation, but thou art able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

Then Daniel, whose name was Belshazzar, was astonished for in one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation thereof trouble thee.

Belshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hath thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

The tree that thou sawest, which grew and was strong, whose height reached into heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth, whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven hath their habitation.

It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong, for thy greatness is grown and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Shew the tree down, and destroy it, yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field, and let it be weft with the dew of heaven, and let this portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him.

[22 : 21] This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my Lord the King, that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wear thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in heaven, ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to him so ever he will.

And whereas the commander to leave the stump of the tree roots, thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule, wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness and thy iniquities, by showing measure to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty.

While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, the kingdom is departed from thee, and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.

They shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

[24 : 09] The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar. And he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws.

And at the end of the days, I never had necessarily lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me. And I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation.

And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. And none can stay his hand, or say unto him what doest thou.

At the same time, my reason returned unto me. And for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me. And my counsellors and my Lord sought unto me.

And I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride, he is able to obey us.

[25 : 34] Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word, and to his name be the praise. Let us sing now verses from Psalm 73.

Psalm 73, we're singing from the beginning, down to verse 9, the first six stanzas. Psalm 73, Yet God is good to Israel, to each pure-hearted one.

But as for me, my steps near slipped, my feet were almost gone. For I envious was, and grudged the foolish folk to see, when I perceived the wicked sought in joy prosperity.

For still their strength continueth firm, their death of bands is free. They are not toiled like other men, nor plagued as others be. Therefore their pride, like to a chain, them compasseth about, and as a garment violence doth cover them throughout.

Their eyes stand out with fat. They have more than their hearts could wish. They are corrupt, their talk of wrong both lewd and lofty is. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their blasphemous talk, and their reproaching tongue throughout the earth at large doth walk.

[27 : 02] So on these verses, Yet God is good to Israel, to each pure-hearted one. Yet God is good to Israel, to each pure-hearted one.

God has for me, my steps near slip, my feet were almost gone.

For thy enviants was angered, the foolish hope to see.

When I perceive the wicked sword, enjoy prosperity.

For still their strength continue and firm, their death of hands is free.

[28 : 23] They are not joyous like other men, nor claim as others' feet.

Therefore, they cry like to a chain, them compasses about.

And as a government violence, God covered them throughout, that I stand out, with that they have, more than their hearts could wish.

They are caught up, their talk of wrong, O good and bold he is.

They set their blood like his hands, in their blasphemous chalk, and their reproaching tongue throughout the earth, and their blood shall flow.

[30 : 21] We can turn to Daniel chapter 4. We're going to look at this chapter this evening. We can read again verse 34.

Verse 34. At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes, and to heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me.

And I blessed him as high, and I praised and honoured him, that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation.

So on. Looking at this passage, I think you could fairly safely argue that there is a resonance in what we find in the chapter, and what we were thinking of this morning, when we looked at the passage in Ecclesiastes chapter 3.

Especially with regard to the sovereignty of God in the affairs of men. God is the sovereign God, and his rule is throughout all the earth.

[31 : 47] And that fact does not depend on man in order for it to be true. Sometimes we think that this can only be true if men are willing to submit to the sovereignty of God.

But that is never the case. God is sovereign, whether men or women acknowledge him or not. And the day will come when that sovereignty will expose the futility of their ignorance and their denial of his right to rule and overrule all our lives.

We know that Daniel, as an example, cannot but confess such a belief. This is the God that he has put his trust in.

This is the God that he relies upon. This is the God that he depends upon. Whatever the world will have him do, whatever Nebuchadnezzar will have him do, Daniel's God is sovereign and he is subject to that God.

And as he's subject, whatever God's will is for him, as God has chosen to reveal it, he is submissive to it. He is willing to do whatever it is that God wills him to do.

[33 : 22] As we saw it last week, without even the name of Daniel being mentioned, Shadroth, Meshoth, and Abednik are of the same mind, they were willing to suffer death.

Even though they were quite willing to believe that God could save them from a fate that was so gruesome as the fate that awaited them when they were cast into a fiery furnace.

but they were quite content as if this is the will of God for us, then so be it. They were not going to dispute it.

But the strange thing is that at the beginning of this chapter we have a wonderful confession and the source of that confession makes you wonder.

because however that confession is made, however that statement is made, whatever prompts it or promotes it, whether it's wholehearted or half-hearted, Nebhadnether is its source.

[34 : 36] And we read in verse 3, how great are his signs and how mighty are his wonders. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and his dominion is from generation to generation.

this was a declaration made by King Nebuchadnezzar, proclamation in fact. As king he was open to make such a public declaration of fact to all whether they chose to hear it or not.

He had the power to accept his authority over his subject and he willingly made such a declaration. And it is a mystery to many why or how he came to do that.

One of the commentators speaking about the confession that is made in chapter 2 we find there that he is brought to acknowledgement that Jehovah exists.

He is several steps further from totaling belief. He confesses that Jehovah is a true God who is the greatest God of all.

[35 : 53] Although he has not yet reached the point when he admits that he is the only God. I think that's a fairly accurate assessment of the way a person and in this case the king can be brought on a path where exposure to God in his judgments and in his blessings even that his eyes are opened to God and that's really the starting point for this.

It's just another dream you might say and it's a very awesome dream and you wouldn't like to have such a dream yourself but this is a location where we are told the king came to experience this whether he was somebody who had this kind of I don't know how you would describe it somebody you know there are many people and they have this propensity to experience certain experiences they have a powerful imagination sometimes they have they present themselves as being hyper-spiritual because they see things they hear things they imagine things and nobody would convince them that the source of what they have seen or heard is anyone else other than God now time will tell whether that is true or not but with regard to Nebuchadnezzar it seems that God was speaking to him through this medium the medium of vision or dream or whatever it is but there is no getting away from the fact that the

God who was speaking to this king in this way was speaking to a king who was a pagan someone who was clearly idolatrous even in his references to Daniel as a servant of the gods he had a knowledge of God but only God among many gods as far as Daniel was concerned because he himself served many idols and he had conquered Israel by reason of violence and a strong Aaron so that makes the confession all the more surprising but I think we can safely say that this is true for anybody and everybody whether you are a king or not or one of the subjects that when God speaks to us by whatever means and God means us to hear what he has to say whether he is speaking to us through the written word or speaking to us through the preached word or speaking to us through the providence that he is king over sovereign over and he means us to hear him then he will be heard and no one but no one who confronts such a

God will will ignore what God is saying will deny that it is God that is saying to him whatever they do with what they know to be the truth when God speaks he means to be heard and it was the case with regard to Nebuchad Nesar and in one sense because of that it was easy for him to profess that knowledge of God which was to all intents and purposes limited and this is the strange thing that we encounter here there is a progression of exposure to God I suppose progression of exposure might be the wrong word but there is a progression in the knowledge that that exposure brings about he meets God God meets with him God speaks to him God speaks to him through servant Daniel God speaks to him through providence and yet the knowledge that he has of God is not complete and it doesn't mean to say that when a person knows

God is speaking that that person will always acknowledge God to be God we spoke this morning to the children about the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of the Spirit in revival and I was thinking in particular of stories that I had heard directly from this person and through recordings things that were made by him that was Sandy Moore from Point and I remember him telling us when we were in his home that when he was coming to the end of his life or when he was feeling that his faculties were diminishing that he set out recording events that he was able to recall from four revivals of religion in Point which is a remarkable thing but he would sit down in an afternoon and take out the tape recorder and record what he could remember and his wife would sit with him and she would prompt his memory and it was a wonderful experience to hear him telling of some of these events but I remember telling us of one occasion when a person in the congregation had become unwell and he was so unwell that he thought he was at death's door so the minister and Sandy were encouraged to go and see him and they spoke to him they spoke to him about his soul and spoke to him about the needs that he had who we all have but they prayed with him and when they prayed well he promised and he made this declaration that if he got better maybe it was even more certain than that when he got better there were so many things he wanted to do for the Lord and Sandy said when we left the ward the minister turned to myself and I said I don't think I liked how much he was going to do for the

[42 : 41] Lord when he got better and sure enough he got better but what he was saying never came to pass it wasn't that the Lord was speaking to him not speaking to him in Proverbs clearly he was here he was and to all intents and purposes from his perspective he was at death's door and the promises that he was making to the minister to the elder to God himself were all an encouragement and inducement to God to make things right to get him back to health so that he could be active in God's name and maybe there are people like that who have experienced God and they know it's God God's word perhaps in a service perhaps in a providence associated with it and it's so direct so personal and so pointed the person knows this is God and I don't need to ask anybody about it and yet they go on after a wee passage of time and they seem to forget it and that was how it was in one respect for the king his confession was an accurate confession it was an indication that he understood something perhaps by reason of

Daniel's dealings with him but he was able at this point to make this declaration which seems to us to be quite remarkable but then when it comes to the next section of the chapter where we hear his dream or his vision we find ourselves and it is a quite dramatic vision it's a very pointed picture that we're given the picture it's a world picture of exactly what is going to happen and you know the king doesn't really need to have it explained to him because he knows he's terrorised by what he sees he understands all too well that the subject of this dream is himself and yet he wants confirmation he sends for his astrologers he sends for his wise men

I'm not sure if he sends for Daniel but Daniel comes in any case now it's interesting that before you read some of the commentators they make reference a broad variety of opinion with regard to most parts of scripture and some look at this passage and they bring it down to a very basic level and they treat the king as if he's having some kind of mental episode and he's going to he's really suffering from some psychological trauma whatever created it this is what it is it can be explained in this way his vision is the result of his personal fears and his the way his just his psyche his makeup lends itself to that but

I don't think that we can for a moment tolerate such an explanation because otherwise you would question why is this account given to us in the scripture what we are given is an account of God's dealings with this passion who was the highest of the high in the land of Babylon a land that God had used for his own ends a king that ultimately was to be used in the same way and when he is dealing with this king he is dealing with him in a way that gets to this person's heart and mind and soul and disturbs him disturbs him very very deeply there is no question but that is what happens and if you have never experienced that then maybe you are fortunate but I met people and I have heard of people and I have read of people who when

God dealt with them that you would almost say that their health was on the brink of breaking because of the way that God got to the root of their problem and the root of their problem was on the part of Nebuchadnezzar this was a king who was proud and who was self important somebody who was indifferent to any other power outside of his own authority he didn't believe it existed and God dealt with him to bring him to an understanding of how things really were and when he does deal with him he does deal with him in a way that brings him virtually to his knees the truth as far as this passage is concerned that he was filled with foreboding he saw himself as the subject of the dream even though he went looking for interpreters

[48 : 48] Stuart Ollyhoff one of the commentators wants to and I think he's quite right in taking this way of dealing with the dream some of the commentators that I refer to they would title their commentary the gospel in Daniel and when they give it that title or subtitle you can almost persuade yourself that everything they see within this book must have Christ in it and there's no question but Christ is at the heart of what Daniel has to say his church and God's role in the church and God's purposes for the church and at the heart of the book of Daniel but we also have to guard against overlaying

Christ against every jot and tittle that is there because then we do God at his service God's but when it comes to Nebuchadnezzar and what God is doing in the life of Nebuchadnezzar we see the end product and we understand by reason of the end product that the steps that are taking him to the end are God's way of impressing upon the mind and the heart of Nebuchadnezzar a truth that he must learn and must possess before he can be better before he can come to a stage where God is God to him so all he'll say is that I'll quote his words God has spoken to Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 1 indirectly in chapter 2 directly he has actually shaken him in chapter 3

God has knocked and knocked and knocked again but the heart of the king is not yet open to God in chapter 4 he's going to knock once more God's grace is sovereign grace and this time he is going to knock in such a way that the door will come right off its hinges God has determined to enter Nebuchadnezzar's heart now you can see where he's coming from what he is talking about there is the conversion the spiritual conversion of the king and that everything that Nebuchadnezzar encounters as God deals with him is to lead him to this conversion and in many respects what that is saying to us is a reminder of the way God sometimes works in the lives of individuals some people believe that when God converts he does it instantly we've said it often that many people have this vision in their mind of God converting in the way God converted in their mind the apostle

Paul when he was Saul of Tarsus he was in one moment in the darkness of ignorance and then in the next moment he was brought into the presence of God through the blinding light of the Damascus road and he was a new man in that moment now in one sense that may be true but in another sense we know that Paul was somebody who experienced the strivings of the spirit of God we know that God spoke to Paul no idea of how many times but Paul himself says that this was his experience that what God was doing in the life of others he was witness to what Paul was seeing in his own life whether he could understand it or not God was doing it and when he came to faith at whatever point that was it was not as a result of one moment in his experience but many now looking at

Nebuchadnezzar's experience we know that God is speaking to him repeatedly and even though he is a king even though he's a sovereign God still needs to deal with him like he deals with everybody else and God deals with everybody else in the way most suitable to their nature and to their circumstances and I don't know what that is for any one of you those of you who came to faith how you came to faith when you came to faith what God used to bring you to faith those of you who have yet to come to faith maybe you've got an image in your mind of this is how God is going to convert me this is how I am going to believe I haven't believed until now because you've not convinced me yet you've not persuaded me yet no one has persuaded me that Christ is what I need

[54 : 24] I hear it often enough but I'm not persuaded so God must be doing something wrong or he must yet have to do something that is right well all we can say is what we have here with regard to this man he was perhaps at this point at a point in his reign not at the beginning some people think that as far as Daniel is concerned that he is more mature as a believer at this point there's no way of telling and the king is like that as well they think that his role is well established and his self-importance is greater than it ever was whether we can actually insist on that is something else but we know nothing has changed because when he came into the experience of

Israel he came as a powerful despot intent on bringing them into submission and that's what he did and if anything you've heard the saying power corrupts absolute power corrupts absolutely nothing had frustrated the power of the king if anything he was more convinced than ever that he was a sovereign with the greatest power in this world and introducing God into his thinking was not really something that he was willing to yield his own position or his own understanding of his position the Christian writer E.J.

Young says the following when God enters into this person's experience and introduces to him through dream what is awaiting that he is to bring him to judgment then this is something that will play upon his mind and the judgment Young says is for the purpose of converting the king Daniel exhorts the king to repent so that the period he will reign prosperously will be extended if he ceases to do well if he ceases to do evil and learns to do well he may enjoy a longer period of prosperity on the throne this is what Daniel brings to his attention that is the measure

I think of the grace of God that God is willing to persevere with a person who is continually resisting his word his entreaties in the gospel but it is a dangerous game for the person who engages in that to play because we can never guarantee that God's grace will not be limited and that grace withdrawn that opportunity to believe kept back from the person who was resisting it he knew the promise that God had given through the dream it's not strange he understood it in verse 30 the king spoke and said is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty it's difficult to teach is he not he takes a lot of discipline for him to learn do you know anybody like him do you know anybody like him who despite the many ways that

God enters into our experience and I cannot exclude myself from this or anyone else either there are many lessons God wants us to learn and we never sit in his classroom and imbibe the truth that he presents us with in a honour we resist it too often we have to go through the same process again and again and learn and relearn what God wants us to understand that's human nature for you but the perilous situation that the king was in God had visited him by way of dream God had brought to his attention a truth concerning the future that awaited him he knew what it meant he understood what it meant Daniel explained it to him and yet within a short space of time what do we find him doing sitting or standing on top of his palace perhaps

[59 : 52] I'm stating these words is not this the great Babylon that I have built or the house of the kingdom by the might of my power for the honour of my majesty where's humility in that where's the discovery that pride is sure to come before a fall and yet in the next verse while the word was in the king's mouth there fell a voice from heaven saying O king Nebat Naser to thee it is spoken the kingdom is departed from thee again some suggest that the king at that moment suffers some kind of mental breakdown and the description is quite like that but however it is explained the word of God came to be fulfilled in his experience the king despite his self-belief meets one greater than himself he meets the true king he meets the true sovereign and as somebody put it he comes to discover for himself the futility of earthly sovereignty and how utterly dependent he and everyone else is on the action of God but just as was predicted his misery was not prolonged it was of short duration and God had promised that or

Daniel had told him that if he was to acknowledge God if he was to acknowledge his need of God then through the submission to God then he would be restored to the fullness of health God sometimes God will put many people into a very dark place or into a very cold corner and you might think that God is cruel when he does that that God is unthinking or unkind when he does that but God knows every one of us he knows what kind of people we are he knew Nebuchadnezzar better than Nebuchadnezzar knew himself Don

Faulkner speaking about the words the most high ruleth wrote the following the one true and living God is an absolute and universal sovereign his purposes cannot be frustrated his power cannot be defeated his will cannot be resisted anything or anyone that can successfully frustrate God's purpose defeat his power and resist his will by virtue of his supremacy would become God but of course they can't of course they can't because he alone is the sovereign God and it's a sad thing if people think that they can frustrate the will of God even as he comes to them and reminds them and reminds them of who he is and what he has done in the passion of Jesus

Christ and it is not because they have the power to resist God but unless they become the willing recipients of his grace as it is in Christ Jesus then the outcome for them is bleak the scripture tells it as much it's truly amazing how this confession comes from the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar I lifted up mine eyes into heaven my understanding returned unto me I blessed the most high and I praised and honoured him that liveth forever whose dominion is an everlasting dominion his kingdom is from generation to generation and so on a wonderful confession surely of faith a wonderful acknowledgement of who God is it's the truth whether it is the truth that he believes or came to believe only by God's grace could he do so and only by

God's grace can it genuinely be his confession we pray that God would enable us as we hear his word and we marvel at the way he comes into the lives of people you know who of us would choose the king such a king a despot a man that was truly wicked and evil a servant of idols a pagan a beneficiary of God's grace sure that can't be right but it is it is and that's the God that is the God who who brings Christ before us don't you dare think that you're better than these pagans who are converted because if you remain unconverted if you remain in a state of denial as to who God is your faith no doubt will be worse than that let us pray most grateful

[66 : 03] God we give thanks for your forbearance for your pursuit of your own people you brought them to know yourself as their God and to know Christ Jesus as the alone saviour of sinners we bless you and thank you for that may you add to their number may you gloriously reveal yourself to sin darkened souls that they may marvel at how foolish they were in not coming sooner cleanse us from every sin in Jesus name amen and sing in conclusion Psalm 130 Psalm 130 we sing the whole psalm Lord from the depths to thee I cried my voice Lord do thou hear into my supplication's voice give an attentive ear Lord who shall stand if thou O Lord shouldst mark iniquity but yet with thee forgiveness is that feared thou mayst be

I wait for God my soul doth wait my hope is in his word more than they that for morning watch my soul waits for the Lord and so on the whole of Psalm 130 to God's praise Lord from the depths to thee I cried Lord from the depths to thee I cried my voice Lord do thou hear unto my salvation voice give an attentive ear Lord who shall stand if thou

O Lord get with him my and Oh God, my soul's a great, my hope is in His word.

More than day that one morning was, my soul which harmed the Lord.

I say for the day that you watch, the morning I hear to see.

[69 : 30] Let Israel open the door, all with Him mercy be.

And plenty of redemption is ever found within.

But from all His equities, He Israel shall redeem.

Amen.