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No Ordinary God– A Witness from the Past

The need for a Christian worldview reset underlines the necessity of knowing God—the one true God who has revealed Himself in the Bible. A recovery of this knowledge is the starting point for both theological reformation and worldview realignment. The fact that so many modern people believe in “just an ordinary God” indicates the true nature of our challenge. This “god” of popular American spirituality is nothing like the God of the Bible—not even close.

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A powerful witness to the transforming nature of true knowledge comes from an unlikely source, but a man with a powerful testimony. His name was Nebuchadnezzar. One of the greatest kings of all history, one of the most effective builders, one of the most illustrious warriors, one of the most brutal tyrants ever to sit on a throne—he was Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. Three times he attacked Judah. Three times he defeated the children of Israel. Historians record that Nebuchadnezzar took the Jews into captivity, and humiliated the Jewish nation. The Bible records that God raised up Nebuchadnezzar in judgment against His own chosen people.

The Book of Daniel relates that Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by dreams, and that Daniel—a faithful son of Israel—accurately interpreted these dreams as warnings from God that Nebuchadnezzar would be judged. The judgment surely came, as we find in Daniel 4:28-37.

Nebuchadnezzar—whose very name invoked a pagan deity—came most unexpectedly to know and worship the one True and Living God, the Most High, and to bear witness to His power and glory. The God of Daniel, the God who reduced the proud Nebuchadnezzar to the state of a wild beast, the God who restored Nebuchadnezzar’s power and reign—this is no “ordinary God.” Nebuchadnezzar was among the world’s most successful kings. It was he who built the great hanging gardens of Babylon—one of the so-called seven great wonders of the ancient world. He had defeated all the known powers of his day, from Egypt to Judah and to every point on the compass. He had built an empire, and millions were under his sovereignty. As he walked on the walls of the royal palace that fateful day, he was filled with a pride the world could easily understand. “Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?”

Nebuchadnezzar is a fitting example of the egotistical pride that has so thoroughly infected our own society and age. America—and much of the modernized world—is experiencing a “Nebuchadnezzar moment” of self-centered pride. Is not this America the great, which we ourselves have built by the power of our own might, and to the glory of our own democratic majesty? Are we not the world’s only superpower? Did we not split the atom, wage war against our enemies, and rule the forces of nature? Are we not the center of the information revolution, the capital of economic energy, the exporter of culture, the protector of freedom?

The same pride can infect our smaller kingdoms as well. Is not this institution, this corporation, this congregation, this denomination what we have built? And to whose glory?

Nebuchadnezzar discovered that the Living God will allow no competitors, and will eventually make His will known. The word from the Sovereign of all Creation was this: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been

removed from you.” The proud king was reduced to eating grass like the cattle, roaming with the beasts, and appearing as a wild and wet bird. He was driven from mankind, and expelled from his royal palace. The king’s humiliation was complete. But the same God who humbled Nebuchadnezzar brought him back to his senses when he raised his eyes toward heaven. With his reason restored, Nebuchadnezzar praised and honored the Most High.

Listen to his testimony: “For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation.” Nebuchadnezzar came to know what a real dynasty was like. He also discovered the One who rules all creation. “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.” What about real power? “And no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have you done?’”

That is a priceless testimony, and King Nebuchadnezzar articulated a powerful vision of a sovereign God, who rules over the affairs of humanity and the business of the nations. This God is no spectator, but the powerful ruler whose will humbles kings and brings hope to the hopeless. This God bears no resemblance to the lighter-than-air deity of so much postmodern theology and popular religion.

There will be no recovery of the Christian worldview until this God—the self-revealing God of the Bible—stands once again at the center of our knowledge and wisdom. Belief in a sub-biblical God will result in a sub-Christian worldview. Just ask Nebuchadnezzar.

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