

Nebu's Lesson

Nebuchadnezzar the king,

To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you. I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me. How great are His signs, and how mighty His wonders!

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation.

But at last Daniel came before me; (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, saying: "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation. These were the visions of my head while on my bed:

I was looking, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew and became strong; its height reached to the heavens, and it could be seen to the ends of all the earth. Its leaves were lovely, its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, the birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. He cried aloud and said thus:

'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, and the birds from its branches. Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from that of a man, let him be given the heart of a beast, and let seven times pass over him. This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.'

This dream I, king Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known the interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you."

Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. So the king spoke, and said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you."

Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!"

"The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which could be seen by all the earth, whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home – it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.

And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him'; this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king:

They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules.

Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity."

All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"

While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven:

"King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."

That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever:

For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.

All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have you done?"

At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me.

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down. (Dan 4:1-37)

Doesn't this remind you of the Book of Job? He also became a victim of his pride and arrogant attitude, he advised Pharaoh to kill the sons of the Hebrews, and thus incurred the wrath of God. After repentance he too was restored with double what he had before. Now just in case you find this hard to believe, here is the quotation from the wonderful Book of Jasher. It bothers me, that the Book of Job does not reveal the reason, why God allowed satan to destroy Job's descendants.

And in the hundred and twenty-fifth year of Israel's going down into Egypt, all the Egyptians saw that their counsel did not succeed against Israel, but that they increased and grew and the land of Egypt and the land of Goshen were filled with the children of Israel.

So all the elders of Egypt and its wise men came before the king and bowed down to him and sat before him. And all the elders of Egypt and the wise men there said to the king,

"May the king live forever; you did counsel us the counsel against the children of Israel, and we did to them according to the word of the king. But in proportion to the increase of labor so do they increase and grow in the land, and look the whole country is filled with them. So now our lord and king, the eyes of all Egypt are on you to give them advice with your wisdom, by which they may rule over Israel to destroy them, or to diminish them from the land;"

the king answered them saying, "Give your counsel in this matter that we may know what to do to them."

And an officer, one of the king's counselors, whose name was Job, from Mesopotamia, in the land of Uz, answered the king, saying,

"If it please the king, let him hear the counsel of his servant;"

the king said to him, "Speak."

And Job spoke before the king, the princes, and before all the elders of Egypt, saying,

“Behold the counsel of the king which he advised formerly respecting the labor of the children of Israel is very good, and you must not remove from them that labor forever. But this is the advice counselled by which you may lessen them, if it seems good to the king to afflict them.

Behold we have feared war for a long time, and we said, ‘When Israel becomes prolific in the land, they will drive us from the land if a war would take place.’

If it please the king, let a royal decree go forth, and let it be written in the laws of Egypt which shall not be revoked, that every male child born to the Israelites, his blood shall be spilled on the ground. And by doing this, when all the male children of Israel will have died, the evil of their wars will cease; let the king do so and send for all the Hebrew midwives and order them in this matter to execute it.”

So the thing pleased the king and the prince; the king did according to the word of Job. The king sent for the Hebrew midwives to be called, of which the name of one was Shephrah, and the name of the other Puah. And the midwives came before the king, and stood in his presence. The king said to them,

“When you do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them on the stools, if it be a son then you shall kill him, but if it be a daughter then she shall live. But if you will not do this thing, then will I burn you up and all your houses with fire.”

But the midwives feared God and did not listen to the king of Egypt nor to his words; when the Hebrew women brought forth to the midwife son or daughter, then did the midwife do all that was necessary to the child and let it live; thus did the midwives all the days. (Jasher 66:10-27) (Also see Exodus 1:7-17)

Now you may say, "But the midwives didn't kill any of the children!"

Remember, that God looks at the heart of a person and judges their intentions. Therefore, just giving this wicked advice, was doing sufficient wrong to be punished harshly. Remember Haman in the Book of Esther? He also made a proclamation to kill all the Jews. He built a gallows 50 cubits high on which to hang Mordecai. After God had turned the situation around, Haman and his ten sons were hanged on the gallows that Haman had built. Another way of looking at this; 'Is that we reap what we sow, later than we sow, and more than we sow.' If we sow violence, we will reap much more violence, than we have sown!

Another place where I see Job's pride, is in the following verses:-

“When I went out to the gate by the city, when I took my seat in the open square, the young men saw me and hid, and the aged arose and stood; the princes refrained from talking, and put their hand on their mouth; the voice of nobles was hushed, and their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth.” (Job 29:7-10)

“Men listened to me and waited, and kept silence for my counsel. After my words they did not speak again, and my speech settled on them as dew. They waited for me as for the rain, and they opened their mouth wide as for the spring rain. If I mocked at them, they did not believe it, and the light of my countenance they did not cast down. I chose the way for them, and sat as chief; so I dwelt as a king in the army, as one who comforts mourners.” (Job 29:21-25)

This sounds more like a reaction of terror, than respect to me. Job obviously occupied a high position, perhaps one where he could easily have arranged for the death of an opponent to his will? Anyway, enough about Job's pride.

Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. (Amo 3:7)

Isn't it strange that Nebuchadnezzar always called for his sorcerers, before calling for Daniel? Perhaps he feared what Daniel might reveal. Only when the magicians admitted they could not interpret the dream, did Nebuchadnezzar call for him. It was a full year, 12 months, before the prophetic dream, started to be fulfilled.

The treestump was bound with a band of iron and bronze. I feel this is the reference to Nebuchadnezzar humbled and still being bound by his pride. Iron and bronze was a direct reference to the Babylonian kingdom.

The Lord warned Jeremiah, describing the Babylonians who would conquer Israel.

"I have set you as an assayer and a fortress among My people, that you may know and test their way. They are all stubborn rebels, walking as slanderers. They are bronze and iron, they are corrupters; the bellows blow fiercely, the lead is consumed by the fire; the smelter refines in vain, for the wicked are not drawn off. People will call them rejected silver because the Lord has rejected them."
(Jer 6:27-30)

The Lord asks Jeremiah, who can break the Babylonians.

The Lord said: "Surely it will be well with your remnant; surely I will cause the enemy to intercede with you in the time of adversity and in the time of affliction. Can anyone break iron, the northern iron and the bronze? Your wealth and your treasures I will give as plunder without price, because of all your sins, throughout your territories. And I will make you cross over with your enemies into a land which you do not know; for a fire is kindled in My anger, which shall burn upon you." (Jer 15:11-30)

Here the Lord answers His own question to Jeremiah, it is He who enables Cyrus, King of Media and Persia, to conquer the Babylonians.

'I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron.' (Isa 45:2)

This also illustrates the Lord's involvement, with the fortunes and history of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar makes the mistake of assuming that his success and good fortune, were all by his own strength. He doesn't realise that he is playing a role in the fulfillment of God's plan for Israel.

"Look among the nations and watch – be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you. For indeed I AM raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation which marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; their cavalry comes from afar; they fly as the eagle that hastens to eat. They all come for violence; their faces are set like the east wind. They gather captives like sand.

They scoff at kings, and princes are scorned by them. They deride every stronghold, for they heap up earthen mounds and seize it. Then his mind changes, and he transgresses; he commits offense, ascribing this power to his god." (Hab 1:5-11)

'The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me. And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.'

 (Lev 25:23-24)

Remember Moses warning to Israel?

"Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, ... when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; ... who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end – then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.' And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day." (Deu 8:11-18)

Everything that Israel went through, and all that the kings of the nations were involved in; was to establish the covenant, which the Lord swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To bring the righteous to a good land, and to remove the wicked from amongst them.

Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, that He will say, "I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks."

For he says: "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent; also I have removed the boundaries of the people, and have robbed their treasuries; so I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man. My hand has found like a nest the riches of the people, and as one gathers eggs that are left, I have gathered all the earth; and there was no one who moved his wing, nor opened his mouth with even a peep."

Shall the axe boast itself against him who chops with it? Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it? As if a rod could wield itself against those who lift it up, or as if a staff could lift up, as if it were not wood! (Isa 10:12-15)

"Woe to him who strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' Or shall your handiwork say, 'He has no hands'? Woe to him who says to his father, 'What are you begetting?' Or to the woman, 'What have you brought forth?' "

Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and His Maker: "Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; and concerning the work of My hands, you command Me. I have made the earth, and created man on it. I – My hands – stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded." (Isa 45:9-12)

So Nebuchadnezzar's lesson in pride and humility, is the fulfillment of prophecy and also a reference to Creation. Note the question, "What have you done?"

Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Gen 3:9-13)

Mankind has also been given 7 times, 7000y, to be tested by the Lord God of Creation; to see whether they will be righteous or unrighteous. At the end of these 7000 years comes the 'Day of Judgment'. The unrighteous will be destroyed and this Earth will be recreated, without any trace of sin. The new earth will be created without a Sea, only fresh water will flow in its rivers. The new earth is the land promised to the forefathers of Israel, and all the righteous people of faith.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Heb 11:13-16)

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. (Heb 11:39-40)

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," says the Lord. (Isa 65:17-25)

"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (Joh 3:17-18, 36)

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