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A table of contents for *The Bible Student* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bible-student_01.php

flying: they were content to make the supreme sacrifice in doing so. Can we be content with a lesser devotion to duty? Loyal service will mean selfless service. The life of unswerving loyalty to Christ will result in a life of enrichment in vital spiritual power, 'We shall be more than conquerors'. Alas, in the Christian ranks today the groan of defeat is heard oftener than the shout of victory. But there is in Christ all the spiritual dynamic to give intensity and strength to every exercise of life. No man can have the slightest influence for God without that spiritual power. A Christian has power and influence in his service for God only in proportion as he allows the Christ of God the throne of his heart. How Christ longs to demonstrate in our poor feeble lives His power and greatness but we hinder Him because we offer Him a few 'furnished apartments' instead of crowning Him Lord of all! If we give him the throne of our hearts His sceptre will crush every selfish passion and all His enactments will be for our supreme good. Is He Lord of our lives? If not, then

Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Giant of Babylon

DR W. M. CLOW

From the hills of Northern Syria to the Persian Gulf there stretches a vast, hollow plain. Through it there flow the Tigris and the Euphrates, and its central valley is named in Scripture, Mesopotamia. Today all is waste and silence. The Arab traders cross it in caravans to find its one emporium in Baghdad. They pass the ruins of its great cities, with wonder at the energy and curiosity of Western archaeologists who are unearthing their buried relics. At one time that wilderness land was the focus of the world's life. It was the cradle of the human race, and the traditional site of the Garden of Eden. It had seats of learning whose scholars accounted other nations as little better than barbarians. Abraham studied astronomy in Ur of the Chaldees before a single stone of Athens was laid. The Wise Men from

the East who came to Bethlehem were the successors of long generations of the subtlest mathematicians the world has known. It was also the theatre of tremendous activities, and the heart of vast empires whose magnificence and luxury are disclosed by every spadeful of the soil thrown up by the explorers among the ruins of their palaces and the debris of their midden heaps. Its cities held millions of men. Their streets were full of commerce. Their homes were served by slaves from all the surrounding nations. Its palaces were sumptuous, and the life in them was one of Oriental splendour and refinement. Its kings and princes and sages were as able as they were imperious. Mightiest name of them all—the name which is stamped on nearly all the bricks which are now to be found in the Chaldean section of our museums—was that of Nebuchadnezzar, the giant of Babylon.

It is difficult for us to enter into the mind and understand the temper of this king of Babylon. He lived six hundred years before Christ spoke. He was an Oriental, and an autocratic ruler whose word no man dared question. But we have in Scripture two portraits of him. One is set forth in the second book of Kings. Did we know no more of him than is given in these chronicles of Judah, we should regard him as a ruthless and relentless conqueror, whose one office was to be God's scourge to men. The second portrait is drawn in the Book of Daniel. It may be an idealized picture, for it is a portrait by a friend. But it is the truer likeness. It is a picture, from within, drawn by one who had fathomed his aims and ideals and known his sorrows, and describes with a prophetic glance his perspective in history. We see Nebuchadnezzar to be not only God's scourge, but the fulfiller of God's gentler will to his people. He is their patron and friend, deeply moved by their faith, and bound by grateful affection to at least one of them for his loyal service. Nebuchadnezzar's generous recognition of Daniel's wisdom, and his tribute to Daniel's fidelity to his end, reveal his nobility of spirit.

As we look into the life and consider the character of Nebuchadnezzar, we find them full of fascination. They have the fascination of greatness. He is well described as the 'Giant of

Babylon'. Greatness is stamped on all he said and did. He was a man cast in an imperial mould,—great-souled, broad-minded, large-hearted. He was the master mind of his generation. No man in his dominions had his reach and grasp in statecraft or in strategy. When we think of Nebuchadnezzar we must class him with Napoleon, or Peter the Great, or Charlemagne, or with the man to whom he was most akin, Alexander of Macedon.

He was great in war. In his early years, while his father, Nabopolassar, was king in Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar was the prince and darling of the vast Chaldean armies, and shared in the subjugation of Nineveh, the rival empire. When he came to the throne, he set himself to conquer the world as he knew it. He tamed the Bed'weens of Arabia from the Red Sea to the uplands of Asia Minor. He took Tyre, which thought itself impregnable in its island-keep, after a thirteen years' siege. He crumpled up the power of Egypt. He sat down before Jerusalem, angered by its proud rebelliousness, and after eighteen months of waiting sacked the city, and carried off the flower of its people as captives. 'Thou, O King,' said Daniel, 'art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory'.

He was even greater as a statesman and administrator. In the East to this day the fame of Nebuchadnezzar rests, not upon his soldierly exploits, but on his achievements in the arts of peace. In his public works he displayed a genius which shows his massive mind and his cultured taste. In walls and water-works, in parks and gardens, in temples and palaces, he proved himself to be one of the master-builders of all time. It may be questioned if the world will ever again see such a city as this far-spreading garden-city of Babylon. Its citizens delighted in a costly refinement and ease. They revelled in luxury. In vessels of gold and silver, in soft carpets and dainty curtains—a manufacture which persists to this day—and in instruments of music, its workmen held as high a place in art as its sages kept in the wisdom of their time. We need not wonder that as Nebuchadnezzar walked on the roof of his palace, and looked out over the city he had built, his heart was lifted up, and he needed to be taught that 'those who walk in pride God is able to abase'.

The story of his conquests, so far as these closely affect the kingdom of God, can be read in the Scriptures. And archaeology has still a great part of Nebuchadnezzar's world to unearth and interpret. But the picture of the man himself, written under the inspiration of God, has been drawn in Daniel, and to that we turn with deep interest. What this man was will explain how God dealt with him and what God did through him. He is represented in three striking situations.

1. The first is *in the hour of his dream of empire*. There is no need to detail that dream, which had slipped from his memory at the morning light, of the image whose head was gold and its feet of part iron and part clay, which the stone cut without hands smote into dust. Nor need we wonder that Daniel, who had divined the mind of the king, was able to interpret it in the power of God's enlightenment. What we note is its discovery of Nebuchadnezzar's inner mind. The dream strangely mingles pride and fear, a conception of his own glory, and a haunting dread for the future of his kingdom. Its head might be of gold, but its time of clay was coming upon it. Surely we read this great king's thoughts aright when we realize that he knew that no kingdom founded on force and held by the sword, though splendid beyond the dreams of men, can continue. There is another kingdom, not founded on conquest, nor based on the might of men's hands. It shall destroy all proud empires, and it shall abide. How far above many modern rulers and statesmen this great-minded man stands! Today men say that God is on the side of the big battalions. They call for more Dreadnoughts. They count their millions of men and pride themselves on the gold in their treasuries. The Stone cut out of the mountain by the hands of God, that Stone which the builders rejected, may seem to fight a hopeless battle with the splendid militancies of the time. But Nebuchadnezzar, descreying it in the dim morning light, saw that its kingdom would fill the whole earth.

2. The second is *in the day of his absolutism*. Some twenty years have passed since the night of the king's dream. A man may change through the whole orbit of his character in twenty

years. Nebuchadnezzar has hardened and coarsened into an absolutism which is a moral peril to himself and a menace to his kingdom's peace. He has become especially gluttonous for deference. That Image set upon the plain of Dura, whose towering height and golden sheen caught men's eyes across the level leagues, is the outward sign of high and heady pride. The men who will not bow the knee are cast into the furnace of fire. That absolutism and craving for flattery, and almost insane gust for adulation and obeisance, is the snare of all successful men. We see it in the successful men of business, the widely appreciated author, and the man who has achieved any position in public life. In small men it is often ludicrous. In men who hold vast forces in their hands it is both dangerous and saddening. To see some captain of industry or magnate of finance demanding men's deferences, and throwing them, with angry resentment, to shame and starvation is to see the deterioration of the king of Babylon again.

3. The third is *in the time of his humbling*. The king is ten years older now, and his pride has become an obsession. Mark him on that day when he walks on his palace roof to overview great Babylon, which he has built 'by the might of my power, and for the glory of my majesty.' While the word was 'in the king's mouth' he was humbled. He went forth—a pitiful madman—to play the beast among the oxen of his park.

We need not wonder at the suddenness or strangeness of the stroke. When a man allows any lower passion to extend its mastery through his whole nature, his manhood will be slowly destroyed, and the hour will come when the beast will be all in all. It may not become a pitiable madness, although our asylum records can tell us Nebuchadnezzar's story again and again. But the beast,—the cunning of the fox, the greed of the wolf, the temper of the tiger, the foul and coarse gluttony of the vulture, the venomous sting of the viper, can all be seen. Then comes God's humbling, and God's dealing. Health fails; some bank breaks; some venture on which all was staked goes wrong; a son or daughter goes down to death, or becomes a living sorrow. 'At the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine

understanding returned to me.' So also, in God's mercy, the beast is driven out of the man who walks in pride, and the man is found in humble submission at God's feet. If ever Daniel admired and revered this great and groping soul, it was in the hour when he saw him, taught by Daniel's word and life, kneeling down before 'the Most High, . . . that liveth for ever.'

Why did God send his people into captivity to Babylon? His purposes were to chasten them for their idolatry, to purge them of their worldly ambitions, to learn the wisdom which Babylon could teach, and, above all, to raise them to a higher knowledge of his character and his will. The Psalms of the Exile and the messages of the prophets show us how the hard-bitten remnant were chastened and taught. It was in God's infinite grace that the master over them, in the first years of their captivity, was this great-souled king of Babylon. For Babylon was not only a discipline but an opportunity. Babylon made God's people know that their destiny was not to be a material dominion, but a spiritual kingdom. That was the truth to which their stubborn hearts never gave a kindly welcome. But God's remnant were delivered from their narrow thoughts, and compelled to lift their eyes to a far-off horizon and to decry a Messianic King who would be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Nebuchadnezzar's care for learning, his far-sighted aims, his gross worldly magnificence, and even his swelling pride and arresting abasement, were all elements in the nurture of a nobler spirit and a larger hope in the people of God.

(from page 3 cover)

the City of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord' (Lk. 2:11); 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world' (Jn. 1:21). Jesus Himself shows His consciousness of the significance of His death as a turning point in the relations of God and man, in His post-resurrection injunctions to go and preach remission of sins in His name to all nations (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mk. 16:15, 16; Lk. 24:44-49).

(Concluded in next issue)