

God Is In Control

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The presidential election, obviously, has dominated the news. The news media are all just abuzz about this thing. They will continue to do so until the election. Dorothy and I tuned in to the last Republican debate this week and got about ten or fifteen minutes of it. It looked like three children fighting in a sandbox over toys. It was just disgusting.

Let me give you a few quotes from those who are running for president. Now, I have to have this disclaimer because these were quotes in the newspaper. Maybe they were accurate and maybe they were not, but they were quoted in the newspaper.

Hillary Clinton, when asked by Anderson Cooper of CNN, "Do you change your political identity based on who you're talking to?" Hillary's answer was, "I have a range of views." Meaning, she didn't answer the question. Later, she said, "I am the only candidate running for president who is not a billionaire. That's simply not true. It's not true.

Then, Bernie Sanders wants Medicare for all US citizens, wants free college tuition for all US citizens with no workable way to pay for it.

Then Donald Trump; let me give you a quote from Donald. "I think apologizing is a great thing but you have to be wrong. I will absolutely apologize sometime in the hopefully distant future if I am ever wrong." That's who we're dealing with here. In an interview regarding a book that he wrote, he says this, "If I told the real stories of my experiences with women—often seemingly very happily married and important women, this book would be a guaranteed best seller."

Now, a third quote from the Donald: "The line 'Make America Great Again,' the phrase that was mine, I came up with it about a year ago and I kept using it. Now everybody's using it and they're all loving it. I don't know. I guess I should copyright it. Maybe I have copyrighted it." The fact is "Make America Great Again" was used by Ronald Reagan in his 1980 campaign.

Then, we've had the dust up recently between Donald and the Pope and that whole brouhaha. The scary thought is that one of these people is probably going to be president of the United States. That is a scary thought. Hillary Clinton could be the face of America and Donald Trump could be in control of our nuclear missile launch codes. How would you like that?

Many of God's people are keenly involved in this election and in politics in general. They watch FOX News. They go online and look at the Drudge Report. They send emails to brethren about the latest news here or there in the political arena. And many of God's people are very concerned about this election.

Historically, the Church has taught that we should not vote. However, there are some groups today who say that it is up to the individual. Let's ask some questions. Should we obsess about politics and this upcoming election? Should we hang on every word that's uttered by these candidates? Should we spend hours watching the debates and the news programs about it? Should we worry about the outcome? Should we vote?

That leads to an even greater questions and more important questions. Who decides who is going to be president?" Who decides that? Who decides who will win wars? Who decides what nations rise or fall? Who decides what economies thrive and which ones don't? Who determines where the stock market is or the price of oil? Big questions.

Today what we're going to see is that God is in control of all human affairs. And if we put our faith in God, we have absolutely no need to stress or worry or fret about who is going to be president. We don't have to worry about Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton or anyone else in that regard.

To prove that God is in control of all human affairs, we're going to look at three examples in the Old Testament of God's supremacy. We're going to spend most of our time on the first one, but then we'll look at two more. And this first one is a king and he is arguably the most powerful ruler the world has ever seen, with the possible exception of Nimrod. Despite his power and his might, he was nothing more than a tool in the hand of God—despite he was the most powerful king that probably ever lived. This king was put in power by God when God wanted and this king was the one removed from power when God determined it was proper to do so. At the end of the day, we should all conclude—and that's the title of the sermon—God Is In Control of all human affairs.

1. We're going to review the history of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and see how God used him.

In this first point, we're going to take a look at this individual, this greatest of all kings. He wasn't simply a powerful king. We will see in the Bible that he was called the king of kings, meaning the king of all kings. Let's go to Daniel 2 and we'll spend a lot of time in Daniel today. Daniel is interpreting a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had of this gigantic image. So, we're going to break into this. The fact is Nebuchadnezzar had this dream and he couldn't remember the dream. So, he called his magicians, his astrologers, and his soothsayers together and he said, "Since you're so smart, you tell me what I dreamt. Then, you interpret what I dreamt." But none of the wise men that he had could do so and he was so mad that he was ready to cut them into pieces until God used Daniel to intervene and stop that. So, we pick up the story now in verse 31 of Daniel 2 where Daniel is now explaining the dream to Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 2:31. [You], O king, [saw], and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before [you]; and the form thereof was terrible.

32) *This image's head was of fine gold, his breast [or chest] and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,*
33) *His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. (KJV)*

Jump to verse 36.

36 *This is the dream; and we will tell [you] the interpretation thereof before the king.*
37) *[You], O king, [are the] king of kings [above all kings]: for the God of heaven ... (KJV)*

Notice this. Daniel is telling Nebuchadnezzar this. It doesn't soak it as we're going to see.

37b) *... for the God of heaven [has] given [you the] kingdom, ... (KJV)*

You didn't earn it. It wasn't due to your brilliance. God has given you the kingdom. He's given you:

37 continued) *... power, [He's given you] strength, and [He's given you] glory.*
38) *And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven [has] he given into [your] hand, and [has] made [you] ruler over them all.... (KJV)*

God did it. Daniel is telling Nebuchadnezzar, "You didn't do this."

38b) *... [You are] this head of gold. (KJV)*

Then Daniel goes on to talk about three subsequent world ruling empires, each weaker than the one before. The Persian Empire was the chest and the arms of silver; Greece was the belly and thighs of brass; and Rome was the legs of iron and the feet partly of iron and clay. Yet, the point is that Nebuchadnezzar was the head in this dream. He was the king of kings and his kingdom was made of gold. Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful ruler, most likely, that the world has ever known, as we're going to see in a little bit, but the fact is God made it so. It was God's determination that made it so.

Let's look at the background of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. He conquered Jerusalem and Judah in 605 BC. He carried away Judah back to Babylon in captivity. And like most absolute dictators in this world, he was incredibly cruel, horribly cruel and this is how he retained his power. We think some of the world dictators today are cruel. They can't hold a candle to Nebuchadnezzar.

Let me read from [The Jewish Encyclopedia](#) about Nebuchadnezzar and about carrying the Jews back to Babylon.

... By his command the exiles [of Judah] on their way to Babylon were not allowed to stop even for a moment as the king feared that they would pray during the respite granted them and that God would be willing to help them as soon as they repented.

So, Nebuchadnezzar marched them day and night like the Bataan Death March in World War II in the Philippines. Going on:

Nebuchadnezzar did not feel safe until the exiles reached the Euphrates, the boundary-line of Babylon.

Now, remember the sermon on Balaam, where the high place was where the god resided and the god had control over all the area he could see. That's what the pagans believed. So, Nebuchadnezzar believed that once they crossed the Euphrates and got into Babylonian territory that their god would have more power than this God of the Israelites would. As we're going to see, Nebuchadnezzar recognized the God of the Israelites, but considered Him one of many and Nebuchadnezzar felt as he got into Babylonian territory, the God of the Jews had no power or less power. Going on; after they crossed the Euphrates:

Then he made a great feast on board his ship, while the princes of Judah lay chained and naked by the river. In order to increase their misery he had rolls of the Torah torn and made into sacks, which, filled with sand, he gave to the captive princes to.

Now Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego at this time were probably twelve to fourteen years old and they were going through this. Going on:

On this occasion Nebuchadnezzar ordered the singers of the temple [of God's temple] to add their music to his feast; but they preferred ...

Listen to this. The musicians of the temple, rather than sing at Nebuchadnezzar's feast, they preferred:

... to bite off their fingers, or even to be killed, rather than to play their sacred music in honor of the Babylonian god.

With that in mind, let's go to Psalm 137:1. This is a Psalm of David written roughly 500 years before this event happened. People say, "There's no God." Well, how did this happen? How did God know this was going to happen 500 years before it did? We have a song that we sing, generally around Passover time, about this event.

Psalm 137:1. *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, [yes], we wept, when we remembered Zion.*

2) We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

3) For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. (KJV)

This very thing! And this was prophesied, written 500 years before the event happened. Nebuchadnezzar wanted them to sing sacred songs to him and his god.

4) How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

5) If I forget [you], O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

6) If I do not remember [you], let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. (KJV)

Now at some Jewish weddings, the groom recites these words, then breaks the glass with his foot in remembrance of this. Going on in verse 7:

7) Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, [Raze] it, [raze] it, even to the foundation thereof.

8) O daughter of Babylon, ... (KJV)

This is the second time Babylon is mentioned in this Psalm.

8b) ... who [are] to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that [rewards you] as [you have] served us.

9) Happy shall he be, that [takes] and [dashes your] little ones against the stones. (KJV)

That's what Nebuchadnezzar did in many cases. Going on now in The Jewish Encyclopedia:

... He heartlessly drove [his] captives before him, entirely without clothing.... But even after the heavily burdened Jews finally reached Babylonia they had no rest from the tyrant, who massacred thousands of youths whose beauty had inflamed the passion of the Babylonian women—a passion which did not subside until the corpses were stamped upon and mutilated. Nebuchadnezzar carried to Babylon, together with the Jews, cedar-trees which he had taken from Lebanon, and millstones which he made the captive youths bear

... He was so greatly feared that as long as he was alive no one dared laugh; ...

Think about that.

... In his arrogance he considered himself to be a god, and spoke of making a cloud in order to enthrone himself like God on high; ...

What a cruel man, a cruel tyrant! Can you imagine the faith that it took for Shadrach to stand up to him after all this; to stand up to Nebuchadnezzar and say, "No, I'm not going to do what you asked me to do?"

Let's now turn to Daniel 4 and now we're going to pick up the story approximately 30 years after Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and Judah. This is the only part of the Bible that is written by an unbeliever, in this case a pagan king, Nebuchadnezzar, and it's written in Aramaic. Daniel 4, we'll start in verse 4.

Daniel 4:4. *I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in [my] house, and flourishing in my palace: (KJV)*

He was aggrandizing himself, and, to be fair, he had already conquered Egypt, Assyria, and razed Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and carried the Jews captive. This is approximately 571-570 BC. Frankly, there was not much left for him to conquer. He had done it all.

5) I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

6) Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.

7) Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they [could] not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. (KJV)

Now, it could be they didn't understand the interpretation, but more likely they were afraid to tell Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation because it wasn't a pleasant one.

8) But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, ... (KJV)

Nebuchadnezzar's god was Bel. Gill's Commentary says "Belteshazzar" means "Bel's treasurer" or it can mean "the keeper of Bel's treasures." So, Daniel comes in before Nebuchadnezzar and going on in verse 8:

8b) ... and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: ... (KJV)

Now Nebuchadnezzar says this because he does not yet recognize God as the one true God. As I said before, Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the God of the Jews as a god, but not the God. Going on in verse 8.

8 continued) ... and before him I told the dream, saying,

9) O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in [you], and no secret [troubles you], tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

10) Thus were the visions of [my] head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. (KJV)

In those days, a tree was a common symbol, which most commonly symbolized either a great man or a great empire or nation. Nebuchadnezzar continues telling Daniel the dream in verse 11.

11) The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

12) The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was [food] 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 of it.

13) I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher ... (KJV)

Now, this is the only time this word "watcher" is used in the Bible. This is the only place. It's Aramaic for angel. So a watcher (an angel):

13b) ... and [a] holy one ... (KJV)

This (holy one) is Aramaic also which means *angel*.

13 continued) ... came down from heaven;

14) He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, ... (KJV)

We know that a watcher is responsible, in this case responsible to give Nebuchadnezzar a warning for his sins as we're going to see. We're all familiar with the watchman in Ezekiel 33. If the watchman sees the sword coming, he must blow the trumpet. And if he doesn't, then the blood is on his head. So, God sent a watcher to warn Nebuchadnezzar about his sins that he needed to repent and change.

14b) ... shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

15) 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: (KJV)

This is crucial in verse 16.

16) Let his heart be changed from [a] man's [meaning a man's heart], and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. (KJV)

Now Moffatt translates "times" as "years." Josephus, who was fluent in Aramaic, also uses "years" instead of times.

Then it's interesting the word for heart, where he said, "Let a beast's heart be given unto him," the word for "heart" is Aramaic and it's the word "lebab" and it means *the seat of intellect or reason*. It means *the mind*. So, we can see here that God changed Nebuchadnezzar's mind from a human's to a beast's.

Now it's possible that God took away for seven years the spirit in man, but probably, more likely is that God allowed a demon—even Satan himself, since Nebuchadnezzar was the king of kings—God allowed a demon to inhabit him during that time. It's interesting this Aramaic word for "beast" is the same as the word used in Genesis 3 in talking about the serpent being more subtle than any "beast" of the field—same word, exactly the same word.

So, this is a key verse and it's a point that we must understand. Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful king the world had ever seen. He even had more power and authority than any leader in the world today. God said, "I'm going to bring you down. I'm going to make you as a beast. I'm going to do it." Going on in verse 17 now.

17) This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent ... (KJV)

Now this is the point and this is the purpose for Nebuchadnezzar.

17b) ...to the intent that the living may know that the most High [rules] in the kingdom of men, and [gives] it to whomsoever he will, and [sets] up over it the basest of men. (KJV)

God wanted the people around to learn that. He wanted Nebuchadnezzar to learn that and He wants us to learn it today. So, the point of the dream is that God causes or allows world leaders to be where they are, including Nebuchadnezzar and all his power, and even allowing him to destroy the temple in Jerusalem. But this applies to all the world leaders today. They are there because either God causes it or He allows it to happen.

The fact is that no amount of worry on the part of the Jews, no amount of preparation that they could have done prior to that would have changed the scenario at all. No amount of hoarding of food on their part, no amount of storing gold and silver somewhere on their part could protect them from the King of Babylon. If you want to read a whole chapter about it for your own personal Bible study, read Ezekiel 7. It's going to happen; there is nothing you can do about it. Going on in verse 18:

18) This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now [you], O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but [you are] able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in [you]. (KJV)

Nebuchadnezzar still doesn't understand, but he will in due course. Verse 19:

19) Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was [astonished] for one hour, ... (KJV)

The Aramaic means Daniel was *stupefied*. And what Daniel saw made him not want to speak for a while because, as we're going to see, what Daniel saw was not good news for Nebuchadnezzar.

19b) ... and his thoughts troubled him. The king [spoke], and said, ... (KJV)

He saw that Daniel was troubled.

19 continued) ... Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble [you]. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate [you], ... (KJV)

Daniel said, "You're enemies are going to love this dream."

19 continued) ... and the interpretation thereof to [your] enemies. (KJV)

"They're going to welcome what I say and you're not going to like what I say." Daniel is tactfully trying to tell Nebuchadnezzar that the interpretation is unfavorable to him. Remember Daniel had been loyal to Nebuchadnezzar for over twenty-five years. Daniel was his right-hand man and Nebuchadnezzar had preserved Daniel because God wanted it that way.

Verse 25, Daniel interprets the dream.

Daniel 4:25. *That they shall drive [you] from men, and [your] dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make [you] to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet [you] with the dew of heaven, and seven times [seven years] shall pass over [you], till ... (KJV)*

This will happen until Nebuchadnezzar realizes something.

25b) ... till [you] know that the most High [rules] in the kingdom of men, and [gives] it to whomsoever he will. (KJV)

"This will teach you this lesson." Verse 26:

26) And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; your kingdom shall be sure unto you, after that [you shall] have known that the heavens do rule. (KJV)

What Daniel is saying here is, "You need to understand, Nebuchadnezzar that you're here because God decreed it. God wanted it. Not because of anything great you have

done and God will allow you to stay in power as long as He wishes. If He wishes it not to be so, you're gone and you need to realize that." Verse 27:

27) Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto you, ... (KJV)

Notice what Daniel says:

27b) ... and break off your sins by righteousness, ... (KJV)

"Replace your sins with righteousness."

27 continued) ... and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; ... (KJV)

Nebuchadnezzar did not do that. He was very cruel as we have shown before.

27 continued) ... if it may be a lengthening of your tranquility.... (KJV)

Where the King James says "tranquility," the New King James says, "A lengthening of your prosperity." "Your prosperity is due to God Almighty. It's not because of you," and Daniel urged Nebuchadnezzar to repent.

Remember when Jonah went to Assyria years before this. Nineveh repented long before this event we're talking about now ever happened. And Daniel was hoping that Nebuchadnezzar would repent as Nineveh repented.

Let's stop here for a minute. We're going to stop the story and let's look at the magnificence of Babylon. Look at what it was and we can then appreciate the stakes involved. Babylon was the greatest city in the world at that time. The Greek historian Herodotus went to Babylon 150 years after this happened and he declared that no other city in the world could even compare to Babylon. This was 150 years later.

Babylon was built on a plain on either side of the Euphrates River. It had two surrounding walls. The outer wall went around the entire city and it was made in a square. The historian Walter Kaiser says this:

It was a huge square, 55 miles in circumference, making it nearly two-thirds the area of New York City, surrounded by a series of walls that made it virtually impregnable.

We'll see why in just a second. Then Robert Koldewey excavated Babylon for eighteen years and this is what he has to say. He noted the security. Remember how security conscious Nebuchadnezzar was? He was paranoid about it because Nebuchadnezzar did not want to be overthrown. Robert Koldewey said in a series of articles that he wrote, "The city walls were surrounded by a thick wall." That's this one we're talking about, 55 miles around. "A thick brick wall, 22 feet thick...." He said it was wide

enough to accommodate two chariots, one going in each direction or two of them going side by side.

Koldewey said, "There was a space outside the wall of 38 feet and then another wall was built that was 25 feet thick," even thicker than the one before. In the event that the outer wall was breached, guess what? The invaders would come 38 feet in and meet another wall equally big and the Babylonians could shoot arrows, throw rocks, do all kinds of things because the invading troops would be trapped between these two walls. Every 160 feet, the walls were topped with watchtowers. There were 360 watchtowers all around the circumference of Babylon and some of those were at least 90 feet tall (nine stories), watchtowers nine stories tall. So, Babylon was very secure. You can think of the amount of money and labor that went into making it so.

Then Koldewey goes on to say, "Nebuchadnezzar constructed the city gates of cedar wood covered with strips of bronze. The most famous of these was the Ishtar Gate." I think we've all heard of that. It's now on display in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. This gate was 15 feet wide and it had an arched passageway underneath it that was 35 feet above the street level. This gate led directly into the Processional Way. The Processional Way was 74 feet wide. That's a big road, 74 feet wide. The Processional Way was used primarily for Babylon's great annual New Year's Day celebrations. Think about it. This goes way back. New Year's Day was celebrated years and years, centuries and millennia ago.

This Processional Way was lined with 120 enameled lions. Every 64 feet there was an enameled lion. (If you want to go see one and you ever get to Boston, there is one of those in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.) On this Processional Way was the famous ziggurat. A ziggurat is a pyramid-type structure. It's square. It ascends in stages. You have a square, then a smaller square on top of it and another one on top of it and then another one on top of it until it looks like a pyramid. This ziggurat had seven successive stages. It rose 300 feet high in the center of Babylon and could be seen for miles around because the city of Babylon was on a plain. The ziggurat was the biggest thing behind the city walls standing up. So it was equivalent to a 30 story building today. It's scientifically estimated that 58 million bricks were used to make this one ziggurat. On the very top of the ziggurat was a temple dedicated to the Babylonian god Marduk.

Then, on a nearby mound in the city, Nebuchadnezzar built one of his most impressive palaces. This was a palace that was made of yellow brick and it was on a mound so that it stood out. The floors were white and mottled sandstone. Near the palace were the famous Babylonian Hanging Gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus described the garden as being 400 feet long, 400 feet wide with walls up to 80 feet. These walls were stepped so that the greenery would hang over the wall, partially obscuring the wall. Therefore, the greenery appeared to be hanging in air.

Due to its height, the Babylonians had to devise a way to water the plants. They used a similar principle to an Archimedes screw, which is a tube with a screw shaped device on the inside that turned with scoops and could carry water uphill through the tube. Given the size of the gardens and the size of the screw, they estimated it took 8,200 gallons of water a day to water the gardens. Magnificent place! Unbelievable place!

Babylon was a marvel of civil planning. It was laid out in rectangles with very wide roads and each road was named for a Babylonian god. It had a bridge that connected the eastern or "new" city to the western or "old" city. And it was a 30-foot wide wooden bridge that went from shore to shore across the Euphrates.

The dwellings of the city have been excavated and many of these were four stories high, all with a central courtyard typical of the Middle East, but the courtyards went up four stories. This was not some village or a hovel kind of thing. This was a modern city that was gorgeous.

The point is that Nebuchadnezzar took credit for it all. He took all of the credit for it. Now let's go back to Daniel 4 and look at verse 29. This is twelve months after Daniel urged Nebuchadnezzar to repent and he was warned.

29) At the end of twelve months he [Nebuchadnezzar] walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

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 honor of my majesty? (KJV)

It's obvious Nebuchadnezzar didn't take Daniel's admonition to heart. Nebuchadnezzar didn't learn a thing. He didn't humble himself. He didn't realize that this was a gift from God. Verse 31:

31) While the word was [still] in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from you.

32) And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make you to eat grass as oxen, and seven times [seven years] shall pass over you, until thou know that the most High [rules] in the kingdom of men, and [gives] it to whomsoever he will. (KJV)

He still had not learned the lesson. Here is payback time.

33) The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as [an ox], ... (KJV)

What God did was change his teeth and change his digestive system just as He will with lions in the millennium—exactly the same.

33b) ... and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. (KJV)

Some historians have traced the legend of the werewolf back to this event. Given what Nebuchadnezzar went through, you can see how that might happen. Verse 34, Nebuchadnezzar speaks after seven years of this.

34) And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up [my] eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me [God likely rebuking the demon], and I blessed ... (KJV)

Notice this.

34b) ... the most High, ... (KJV)

Not one of the gods, the Most High.

34 continued) ... and I praised and honored him that [lives] forever, ... (KJV)

Again, Nebuchadnezzar has new understanding.

34 continued) ... whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: (KJV)

God controls everything.

35) And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: ... (KJV)

And Nebuchadnezzar includes himself here, finally.

35b) ... and he [does] 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 [are you doing]? (KJV)

Now Nebuchadnezzar is beginning to see reality.

36) At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, [my] honor and [my] brightness returned unto me; and my counselors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. (KJV)

"Now," verse 37, he's finally humble and says:

37) Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven [the one true God], all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase. (KJV)

Nebuchadnezzar finally learned the lesson. He finally got the message that he was there at the convenience of God, at the will of God and nothing else. Now Nebuchadnezzar is beginning to understand the true God.

The point of this whole encounter is that God did all of this. God set Nebuchadnezzar up. God took Nebuchadnezzar down at His (God's) will according to God's timeframe. It was not done by the power of a man. The same holds true today. Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful king the world had ever known but he was simply a tool in God's hands. That's all He was.

Now, in closing out this point, let's look at two scriptures describing the relationship between God and Nebuchadnezzar. Let's go to Jeremiah 25 and we'll begin in verse 8. This describes what God is versus what Nebuchadnezzar was.

Jeremiah 25:8. *Therefore thus [says] the Lord of hosts; Because [you] (referring to Judah) have not heard my words, (KJV)*

"You didn't heed My warnings."

9) Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, [says] the [Eternal], and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, ... (KJV)

Notice what God says:

9b) ... my servant, ... (KJV)

Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant doing God's will.

9 continued) ... and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a hissing, and perpetual desolations. (KJV)

God did that. The temple was destroyed. Jerusalem was razed and the people were taken captive.

Now jump to chapter 43 in Jeremiah. Here is an account where Judah is running to Egypt to try to escape Nebuchadnezzar and God had told them previously "Don't do this. Stay there. If you will repent, I will protect you," but they would have none of it. Jeremiah 43:8.

Jeremiah 43:8. *Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, ... (KJV)*

Tahpanhes was the place where legend says, tradition says, that Jeremiah was stoned to death.

8b) ... saying [to Jeremiah],

9) Take great stones in [your] hand, and hide them in the clay in the brick kiln, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah;

They were down in Egypt, fleeing to where God told them not to go.

10) And say unto them, Thus [says] the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them. (KJV)

God is saying to Judah, "Why on earth do you flee Nebuchadnezzar to go to Egypt, when I am going to cause Nebuchadnezzar to conquer Egypt? I told you to stay put. I told you to repent, but no, you knew better and you fled to Egypt. I'm telling you Nebuchadnezzar is going to come down here and capture all of you, including Egypt."

The fact is that Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest world ruler that has ever been, had more power, more authority. And, yet, as we have seen in these two scriptures, he was simply a servant of God doing God's will. Nebuchadnezzar ruled because God gave him the kingdom. Not because Nebuchadnezzar earned it, not because of his wisdom or skill or power, but God caused it to happen for God's purpose.

2. We're going to look at another tool of God and, that is, Cyrus the Great.

This second person we're going to look at is a much shorter story. On October 10, 539 BC, the Persians conquered the Babylonians. They conquered Babylon, this impregnable city. It's interesting how they did it. They went upstream in the Euphrates, diverted the river so that the riverbed was dry and they just walked down the riverbed into the city. Nobody had ever thought of that when they were building this fortress Babylon. They just walked into the city at night and plundered the whole city. They got in that way. Cyrus the Great became this second world-ruling king. Remember the great image? Cyrus is the chest and the arms of silver. Let's go to Daniel 6 and look at verse 28, to see another tool in the hands of God.

Daniel 6:28. *So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. (KJV)*

Most scholars believe that Cyrus was the world-ruler and that he appointed Darius king over the Babylonian territory, whereas Cyrus was the ultimate king over the whole empire.

Cyrus had great power, but apparently, he was fairly ethical because there is a "Cyrus Cylinder." It's a cylinder that has writing on the outside, a Cyrus Cylinder, which is in the British Museum today. It is the oldest declaration of human rights. It was written by Cyrus, ordered by his scribes. He was not as cruel as Nebuchadnezzar, but he was also not as powerful because remember Nebuchadnezzar is the head and Cyrus is the chest.

Isaiah prophesied between 742 approximately and 701 BC. He prophesied after the fall of Israel, but before the fall of Judah. Before Nebuchadnezzar came, destroyed the temple, and took the Jews captive, Isaiah prophesied before then. With that in mind, let's go to Isaiah 44. We'll begin in verse 24 and I'll read that out of the New King James. This involves Cyrus.

Isaiah 44:24. *Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: ... (NKJV)*

Notice God's power here.

*24b) ... "I am the Lord, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself;
25) Who frustrates the signs of the babblers, and drives diviners mad; ... (NKJV)*

I'm sure God got a little bit of humor out of making people's prophecies not come to pass.

25b) ... Who turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness; (NKJV)

That applies today also.

26) Who confirms the word of His servant, and performs the counsel of His messengers; ... (NKJV)

Notice this. It's before the fall of Jerusalem.

26b) ... Who says to Jerusalem, 'You shall be inhabited,' ... (NKJV)

Jerusalem was already inhabited when this was written.

26 continued) ... to the cities of Judah, 'You shall be built,' ... (NKJV)

When this was written, those cities were already built.

26 continued) ... and I will raise up her waste places; (NKJV)

They were already there.

27) Who says to the deep, 'Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers'; (NKJV)

Verse 28, now notice this prophecy.

28) Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," and to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."' (NKJV)

This was 150 to 200 years before Cyrus was ever born. This was written while the temple and Jerusalem were still standing. God prophesied about this second world-ruling monarch calling him by name. Not only saying that he would rule, but that he would perform God's pleasure. And he would rebuild a temple that had yet to be destroyed. Think about that and what God did by His might.

Now let's go to Ezra 1:1 and see where God motivated and inspired Cyrus to do that very thing. I'm reading out of the King James. This is the first year of Cyrus' reign after he conquered Babylon.

***Ezra 1:1.** Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,*

2) Thus [says] Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven ... (KJV)

Notice this. Notice Cyrus' attitude, compared to Nebuchadnezzar.

2b) ... [has] given me all the kingdoms of the earth; ... (KJV)

Cyrus understood his place, unlike Nebuchadnezzar in the beginning.

2 continued) ... and he [has] charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

3) Who is there among you of all his people [referring to the Jews]? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, ... (KJV)

Notice this.

3b) ... (he is the God,) ... (KJV)

Cyrus knew that.

3 continued) ...and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, which is in Jerusalem. (KJV)

So, we've seen here that Nebuchadnezzar was probably the most powerful king that has ever ruled, the most powerful human ruler ever. And he was the head of that golden image and the Bible tells us Nebuchadnezzar was a servant of God. Then, we've seen that the man who conquered Babylon, Cyrus, was prophesied by name 200 years before he was ever born. And God says that Cyrus performed all of God's pleasure. So, we see here a second example of God in control of all things.

3. God uses Satan himself as a tool.

Let's look at this final tool that God uses. Let's go to Isaiah 27:1 out of the King James. This is a prophecy. This is what will happen to Satan. We know Satan is called Leviathan in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 27:1. In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea. (KJV)

We know that Leviathan is Satan. With that in mind, let's go to Job 41 and we'll read starting in verse 1. Job has gone through all of these trials. We're coming to the end of the account and in Job 41, God is speaking to Job after all of Job's suffering and He's trying to talk some sense into Job. God asks the question to Job.

Job 41:1. [Can you] draw out leviathan with an hook? ... (KJV)

"You, Job, who can do all things in your own mind, can you do this?"

- 1b) ... or his tongue with a cord which [you let] down?
- 2) [Can you] put a hook into his nose? Or bore his jaw through with a thorn?
- 3) Will he make many supplications unto [you, Job]? ... (KJV)

"Are you so great that Satan will come and appeal to you?"

3b) ...will he speak soft words unto [you]? (KJV)

Satan was the one who gave Job all his troubles, all the boils, etc. God's asking, "Is he going to speak kind soft words to you, Job," who is still in this agony and pain.

4) Will he make a covenant with [you]? ... (KJV)

"Will he barter with you? Make an agreement with you? Are you so great that Satan will do that?"

4b) ... wilt [you] take him for a servant forever? (KJV)

This is an indication that Satan is God's servant and does God's will.

5) *[Will you] play with him as with a bird? [Or will you] bind him for [your] maidens? (KJV)*

"Can you do that, Job?" Here Satan is described essentially as a plaything of God. He's like a puppet on a string. God will make Satan do whatever God wants Satan to do, to be used by God. Like Nebuchadnezzar and like Cyrus, Satan is described as God's servant.

Remember in Job chapter 1, when God says to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job?" God brings up the subject. Then, God manipulates Satan to do whatever God wants him to do. God used Satan then to accomplish His purposes as God uses Satan today to accomplish His purpose.

So we have seen here that Satan is a mere servant of God. Satan thinks he's winning. The world thinks Satan is winning—those who look at the fruits of this world. The fact is that the only reason Satan is the god of this world is because that is what God wants. God will allow Satan to be the god of this world until such time as God no longer wants him there. God controls it all. So, the third tool that God uses is Satan.

4. God is in control of all human affairs.

This is the fourth and last point, and this is the point of the sermon: God is in control of all human affairs.

Let's go to Isaiah 40 and we'll begin in verse 15. Notice God's description of nations. Nebuchadnezzar thought he was so great, so wonderful and his nation was so wonderful. And people—whether it's the United States or Russia or some other county—think, "Our country is so great and so wonderful."

Isaiah 40:15. *Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, ... (KJV)*

It's funny that slang term "drop in a bucket" which we've all heard all of our lives. That slang term began in the Bible.

Isaiah 40:15. *Behold, the nations are as a drop [in] a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he [takes] up the isles as a very little thing. (KJV)*

Jump to verse 22:

Isaiah 40:22. *It is he that [sits] upon the circle of the earth, ... (KJV)*

This scripture that tells us that the earth is round, was written long before scientists figured out that the earth is round.

Isaiah 40:22. *It is he that [sits] upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that [(God) stretches] out the heavens as a curtain, and [spreads] them out as a tent to dwell in: (KJV)*

Notice this in verse 23.

23) That [brings] the princes to nothing; he [makes] the judges of the earth as vanity. (KJV)

This is clear that God is in charge. He is in control and nothing is going to happen that is contrary to His will--nothing. Now let's read three verses that tell us the absolute facts that God is in control. Let's go to Psalm 75 and read verse 6. People who worry and fret need to read these verses. God is in control. God hasn't somehow gone away, He isn't taking a nap, He hasn't lost His power, or anything like that.

Psalm 75:6. *For promotion [comes] neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. (KJV)*

North is not mentioned because the Bible indicates that God's Kingdom is in the north.

7) But God is the judge: he [puts] down one, and [sets] up another. (KJV)

That's a fact. Let's go to Daniel 2 and read verse 21. We can't ignore these scriptures. If we take them to heart, there is no reason to worry, no reason to wring our hands.

Daniel 2:21. *And he [changes] the times and the seasons: ... (KJV)*

Daniel 2 verse 21, notice the latter part of the verse.

21b) ... he [removes] kings, and [He sets] up kings: ... (KJV)

He did with Nebuchadnezzar. He did with Cyrus. He does with Satan. And He does it today.

Finally, let's jump to the New Testament, Colossians 1 and we'll begin in verse 16. Here Paul is talking about Jesus Christ. We can't forget these scriptures.

Colossians 1:16. *For by him [referring to Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be [Notice this.] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (KJV)*

There is no wiggle room here! Thrones, dominions, principalities and powers were created by Christ and allowed to be there by God and Christ.

17) And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. (KJV)

Take this scripture and compare any human leader to Christ as described in this scripture. A human leader, as we read earlier, is nothing but a grasshopper. Donald Trump, Hillary, anybody else—they're just grasshoppers to God and to Jesus Christ.

The point is that God, through Christ, is in control of all human affairs and He will determine who is president and not human beings. That is a fact.

Now let's conclude. Let's wrap this up now.

Some in the greater Church of God vehemently want this person to be president or that person to be president. I've talked to people who want a democrat to be president. I've talked to other people who want this Republican or that one or some other Republican to be president. They spend hours watching the news. They spend hours going online to figure out the latest movements of strategy—what this person's doing and what that guy's doing, and this gossip or that gossip.

It's just humorous to hear them, particularly the three Republicans that are now in the forefront, calling each other liars, calling each other stupid, yelling insults at each other. They were on the stage the other night and nobody could hear anything because they were yelling at each other so loud. Just like little kids.

We need to stop and ask at this juncture, "Who does God want to be president? Does my opinion count? Does my desire count?" We ought to stop and ask, "Of all these people, who does God want to be in charge for His purpose, to accomplish His goals?"

Maybe He wants Hillary to be president to fulfill prophecy. Did you ever think of that? Let's go to Isaiah 3:12. Maybe He wants Hillary to be the president of the United States to fulfill this prophecy. This is very interesting. There is so much information in this one verse. We'll take it in stages here.

Isaiah 3:12. *As for my people, children are their oppressors, ... (KJV)*

Boy is that true today! Much of the killing is done by young people. Much of the robbery is done by young people. And many people, even in wealthy families, bow down to their children. Their children can do no wrong. They put them up on pedestals. Children are their oppressors.

12b) *... and women rule over them.... (KJV)*

Germany had a chancellor that was a woman. Israel had a chancellor that was a woman. The United States has never been there, but maybe God wants someone there to fulfill this prophecy.

Going on, notice God lamenting.

12 continued) ... O my people, they which lead [you] cause [you] to err, and [to] destroy the way of [your] paths. (KJV)

Past presidents—regardless whether they were men or women, it doesn't make difference—of all nations are causing people to err and they are destroying the paths of righteousness because they do not follow God. They do not even acknowledge God.

Maybe God wants Bernie Sanders to bankrupt this country. Maybe God wants that to happen. Maybe He'll get Bernie elected so that we go down faster because we destroy ourselves economically. Maybe God wants Donald Trump to start World War III. Maybe He wants Donald Trump to fulfill some of the prophecies in Revelation about launching nuclear weapons.

The point is” Who are we to oppose God's will? Who are we to tell God that this person should be president? What arrogance on our part to get down on our knees and beg God to have this person elected or that person elected! God knows far more than we do. He has purposes that go far beyond things we can even comprehend. So, who are we to ask God to do this or that? God is in charge, always has been, always will be in charge. Let's go to Numbers 23:19. We need to remember this verse as far as the power of God, the wisdom of God, and the purpose of God. Numbers 23:19 was true in the Old Testament. It is just as true today. We have to remember this.

Num 23:19. God is not a man, that he should lie; ... (KJV)

All of the presidential candidates, one of the things that is common to all of them is that they lie.

19b) ... neither the son of man, that he should repent: ... (KJV)

God called Nebuchadnezzar to repent. God calls all people to repent. And, of course, right now they will not do so.

19 continued) ... [has] he said, and shall he not do it? ... (KJV)

God has said, "This is going to happen. These are the prophecies. I'm going to bring them to pass."

19 continued) ... Or [has] he spoken, and shall he not make it good? (KJV)

God is going to do what God is going to do. He's going to fulfill His will. He's going to fulfill prophecy. And who are we to question that? Who are we to say, "No, God. I know better. This person needs to be president"? I know one man who said, "Hillary needs to be president. I'm just convinced of that." Who are we to even enter an opinion?

The question for us today, as we close, is what government should we be loyal to and what government should we be involved in? Is it the politics and government of Canada or the United States or England or Australia or any other country? The answer is in Philippians 3:20. Let's go there. This is what we need to remember when the politics start dominating the news and the newspapers. If you want to read the newspaper or watch the evening news for a laugh and for a farce, then great, sit there and laugh. That's fine, but to go there to fret and stew is something entirely different. Philippians 3:20 out of the New King James.

Philippians 3:20. *For our citizenship is in heaven, ... (NKJV)*

It is not on this earth. We are not loyal to the United States. We are not loyal to Canada or Great Britain. As blessed as we have it right here and right now, our main loyalty is not there.

20) For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (NKJV)

That's where our focus should be. That is who we are loyal to. Therefore, we have no business voting for governmental leaders. We should not vote for governmental leaders.

If somebody wants to put a freeway right through your house and they put it up for a vote, yes, you could go down and vote on that. But still in all, guess what? A prayer far outweighs a single vote.

But the fact is we have no business voting for government leaders. God will decide as He did with Nebuchadnezzar, as He did with Cyrus, as He does with all other human leaders. God will decide; therefore, we have no business voting for any politician. We don't have to worry about who is going to be president. We don't have to worry about what world leaders are doing because God is in control of all of that.

All of that worry and watching and listening and paying attention to politics, guess what that does? It gets our focus off what is really important. What's really important is our relationship with God. Every minute we spend stewing about the Democrats or the Republicans or some vote or something, is a minute taken away from getting to know God better, from praying and studying and meditating and having our minds where they ought to be.

If we make our relationship with God our number one priority, He is going to take care of all the rest. We can have faith in that. Then, we can have peace. Then we can be at peace. The world can be in chaos around us, but then we can have peace. So, let's not worry about the world and what is going on in the world in that sense. Yes, we need to watch as time gets closer, but we need to watch in order to prepare ourselves to be the Bride of Christ. Let that be our main focus and let's not get distracted by the politics of this world.