

Review: KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible from Thomas Nelson

As part of the Thomas Nelson Bibles blogger program, I have received a copy of the [KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible \(Red Letter Edition\)](#) published by [Thomas Nelson Bibles](#)/Harper Collins Publishers at no cost to me in exchange for an honest review here on the Adonai Shalom USA blog.

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Thomas Nelson [KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible](#) Description

The [KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible](#) uses the popular Authorized King James Version of the Bible.





This is an absolutely beautiful Bible. The cardboard book sleeve does an excellent job of protecting the Bible itself from shelfware, as evidence by the fact that in shipping, the front of the book sleeve did get slightly dented, but the Bible itself was entirely undamaged.

This Bible contains 53,000 (!!!!!!!!) center-column references! 53,000!? What a valuable resource for any Christian!

[Thomas Nelson](#) Publishing company never disappoints. The Bibles that they print are always high in quality and eye-catching.

This Bible is large print, meaning that the font size is a readable 10.5-point. This Bible includes Bible book introductions, a concordance, a 365-day reading plan, and a matching satin ribbon bookmark. It is a Red Letter Edition, which is also a definite bonus because the reader can quickly identify the words of our Savior Jesus.

Thomas Nelson Life-Time Guarantee

The [KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible](#) also comes with the Thomas Nelson life-time guarantee. To register, visit www.thomasnelsonbibles.com/guarantee.

[Color Options for the KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible](#)

I absolutely LOVE the pink color on this Bible. I've always been pretty traditional in my book collecting; most of my copies of the Bible are black, a few brown, and a maroon one here and there. The soft pink offered as an option for this Bible makes this a beautiful and thoughtful gift for any female pastors in your life, mothers, grandmothers, and young

women.

The [KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible](#) is also available in the more traditional black or brown. All of these [KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible](#) have beautiful golden gilded edges on the pages, making this feel like the sacred Book it truly is.

Maps in the [Thomas Nelson KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible](#)

Thomas Nelson Bibles are renowned for their beautiful color maps included in so many editions of the Bibles they print. The [KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible](#) is no exception:



With all that is currently going on in the Middle East, being able to quickly turn to maps that express God's story in His dealings with humanity is truly a blessing. I find that Bible history comes so much more alive with the use of colorful maps such as those included in this [KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible](#).

Readability

This lovely Bible is readable, not only because of the 10.5-point Comfort Print (TM), but also because the layout is so well-crafted. The introduction does not draw attention to itself and likewise the center-column references do not cause confusion to the following of the actual Biblical text.

The [King James Version Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible](#) lays flat, which also aids in its readability because it won't fold in on itself when the reader is trying to read it. Here is an example of this Bible laying flat, open to the book of Ecclesiastes:



My recommendation:

★★★★★

Rating: 5 out of 5.

I would give the [Thomas Nelson KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible](#) in pink Leathersoft TM a **5 out of 5**.

Rev. Jennifer Mieliulis Fuentes, *M.Div.*, *Duke University*

Book details

Title: KJV Large Print Center-Column Reference Bible

Author:

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PURCHASE LINKS: [Amazon](#) | [Christianbook](#)

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A New King in charge: King Belshazzar

In our study of Daniel, we have talked at length about King Nebuchadnezzar: from his rule over magnificent and wealthy Babylon to his humiliation when he lived in the manner of beasts. King Nebuchadnezzar's wits had been restored to him, but meanwhile, kings rise up and fall . . . and at this point in the historical record, there was a new king in charge.

[Daniel 5:1](#)

[Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand.](#)

Succession

King Nebuchadnezzar to King Belshazzar

Remember when we talked about [the kingdoms that would come after Babylon? The Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek \(Hellenistic\) Empire, and the Roman Empire, followed by](#)

[divided nations.](#)

A historian named Berossus had chronicled what was happening in Babylon. He actually served as a Babylonian priest of Bel Marduk, but he was Hellenistic and actually wrote in Koiné Greek, a departure from Chaldean (an Aramaic dialect). We see a transitioning from the Babylon of King Nebuchadnezzar into a weakening empire that would be overtaken first by the Medo-Persians and then by the Greeks.

Berossus gives a timeline for some of these kings which helps us understand where King Belshazzar fits in.

King Nebuchadnezzar had a son. His name was Evil-Merodach. His Babylonian name would be transliterated more like *Awil-Marduk*, but I think as generations have passed, scribes left it as "Evil" because he was evil, licentious (*lawless, crude, unrestrained*), and served Marduk so the name fits and has stuck.

If you remember from [Daniel 1](#), King Jehoiachin of Judah was the son of King Jehoiakim of Judah.

[2 Chronicles 36:9](#) "Jehoiachin was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD." (He did evil, just like his father Jehoiakim)

Well, if we turn to [2 Kings 25:27-30](#), Evil-Merodach befriends the wicked Judean king:

[²⁷ Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison.](#)

[²⁸ He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat](#)

than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon. ²⁹ So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. ³⁰ And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

This is also reported in [Jeremiah 52:31-34](#):

“Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison.”
[Jeremiah 52:31](#)

ExtraBiblical sources such as Berosus and even Ptolemy record that Evil-Merodach ruled for only 2 years and then was assassinated by his brother-in-law. His brother-in-law was named Nergal-Sharezar.

Well, the Bible does at least mention Nergal-Sharezar in [Jeremiah 39:3](#) –

“Then all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sarezer, Rabmag, with the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon.” [Jeremiah 39:3](#). He is also mentioned in [Jeremiah 39:13](#).

It is said he ruled for 4 years and then he died of natural causes. The ancient historians say that he had a son, Laborosoarchod, who ruled as a child, but he had a mental disorder. He only ruled for 9 months when a gang of conspirators beat him to death.

The gang appointed one of their guys, Nabonidus, to be the new king.

Nabonidus had a son named Belshazzar, who became king. These

were the final Babylonian kings.

Don't confuse Daniel's Babylonian name, "Belteshazzar" with this King Belshazzar. Very similar and even in meaning, their gods will "protect," but Daniel is not the king, so don't get confused by all these names.

Daniel 5:2-4

Belshazzar's desecration of the temple utensils

² "While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. ³ Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which had been in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. ⁴ They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone." (Daniel 5:2-4)

It has been years since the holy items had been taken from the Jerusalem temple.

But Belshazzar wanted to make a point of how mighty his empire was and commanded that the gold and silver cups and utensils be brought to be used at his pagan feast and all those people drank from them with no shame.

Verse 4 should catch our attention. They drank their wine and "praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone."

Remember King Nebuchadnezzar's statue dream? It was constructed of each of those items. Their worship was severely

misguided and would result in the fulfillment of that dream.

Daniel 5:5-12

⁵ In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. ⁶ Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.

⁷ The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." ⁸ Now all the king's wise men came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation. ⁹ Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished.

¹⁰ The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change. ¹¹ There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.

¹² Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar,

now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.” Daniel 5:1-12

“Inasmuch as an excellent spirit,
knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams,
solving riddles, and explaining enigmas
were found in this Daniel,
whom the king named Belshazzar,
now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.”

Daniel 5:12



The handwriting on the wall

If you've ever heard that phrase, "the handwriting's on the wall," everything's going down from here . . . it comes from this.

King Belshazzar watched as he experienced a vision. He saw a man's hand writing on the wall. Like King Nebuchadnezzar's before him, King Belshazzar's countenance changed . . . and his knees buckled!

Like [King Nebuchadnezzar \(these kings never learn!\) he called for his astrologer and sorcery team](#). But, as usual, they were useless for the task ([verse 8](#)).

The Queen's wisdom

According to commentaries, the queen mentioned in [Daniel 5:10](#) is not King Belshazzar's wife, but rather the queen mother.

The Queen was either versed in their national history, had a good memory, or feared God. She knew about Daniel and counseled Belshazzar to call for Daniel. She was certain Daniel could give Belshazzar the interpretation of the writing on the wall.

Daniel 5:13-16

¹³ Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, "Are you that Daniel who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? ¹⁴ I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.

¹⁵ Now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing. ¹⁶ And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

Daniel had been governor, but with all the different kings rising to power, he had essentially been demoted and forgotten about. Now King Belshazzar offers to make him third in command.

But Daniel wants no part of that:

Daniel 5:17-24

¹⁷ Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I

will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation. ¹⁸ O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. ¹⁹ And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down.

²⁰ But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. ²¹ Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.

²² “But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. ²³ And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified. ²⁴ Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written.”

Daniel is very confident in who he is as a prophet. He knew he would be able to interpret the writing.

When you serve God and you know who you are in Christ, you can have that same conviction. Learn to operate in the gifts of the Spirit and allow God to use you to bless others. Daniel had a prophetic gifting and He cultivated that as He sought

God.

Daniel reminds King Belshazzar about all that happened to his predecessor King Nebuchadnezzar.

[Verse 22](#) is very convicting because Daniel tells Belshazzar, “you knew all [of] this.”

This isn't news to you, king.

Daniel describes 5 sins of Belshazzar:

1. Belshazzar hasn't humbled his heart
2. Belshazzar has lifted himself up against the Lord of heaven. Daniel uses the term, “Lord.” In those earlier chapters, the term “God” was often used. But it has been established which God we are talking about, and not only is the God of Israel Supreme, but He is LORD of heaven. Lord over all of Belshazzar's gods.
3. Belshazzar used the LORD's holy vessels to drink wine at his pagan feast.
4. Belshazzar has given praise to idols who cannot see, hear, or know.
5. Belshazzar refuses to glorify the God who has given him life, and who owns everything

Daniel 5:25-31

²⁵ [“And this is the inscription that was written:](#)

[MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.](#)

²⁶ [This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;](#) ²⁷ [TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting;](#) ²⁸ [PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes](#)

and Persians.” ²⁹ Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

³⁰ That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. ³¹ And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

Daniel gives the interpretation, Belshazzar receives it by promoting Daniel again, but that very night, Belshazzar was killed.

And Darius, the Mede received the kingdom.

Babylon has fallen.

A new King in charge

The Babylonian king didn't measure up.

The world's systems will bring to power all sorts of kings and leaders. But God wants to be the King in charge.

If you've placed your trust in Jesus, He is the new King in charge of your life.

Let Him rule and reign in Your life!

The Medo-Persian Empire and the situation in the Middle East today

This weekend, Iran launched an aggressive attack against Israel.

In the Bible, Iran is also known as Persia, as well as Elam.

[Jeremiah 49:35-39](#)

“Thus says the Lord of hosts:

‘Behold, I will break the bow of Elam,

The foremost of their might.

Against Elam I will bring the four winds

From the four quarters of heaven,

And scatter them toward all those winds;

There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go.

For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies

And before those who seek their life.

I will bring disaster upon them,

My fierce anger,’ says the Lord;

‘And I will send the sword after them

Until I have consumed them.

I will set My throne in Elam,

And will destroy from there the king and the princes,’ says the Lord.

‘But it shall come to pass in the latter days:

I will bring back the captives of Elam,’ says the Lord.”

“For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies And before those who seek their life.
I will bring disaster upon them, my fierce anger,’ says the LORD;
‘And I will send the sword after them until I have consumed them.
I will set My throne in Elam, and will destroy from there the king and the princes,’ says the LORD.”

Jeremiah 49:37-38



The Elamites and the Medes became part of the Persian Empire,

and we just saw in [Daniel 5](#) that the Medo-Persian Empire conquered Babylon in 539BC.

The fall of Babylon was prophesied in [Isaiah 21:1-2](#):

[“The burden against the Wilderness of the Sea.](#)

[As whirlwinds in the South pass through,
So it comes from the desert, from a terrible land.
A distressing vision is declared to me;
The treacherous dealer deals treacherously,
And the plunderer plunders.
Go up, O Elam!
Besiege, O Media!
All its sighing I have made to cease.”](#)

The area in southern Babylon near the Persian Gulf was known as the “Land of the sea.” I imagine it would have been seen as a tourist destination, a beautiful place.

Well, God mocks their view of beauty. He calls it the Wilderness – in other words, the Wasteland desert of the sea. Babylon would be made desolate.

Daniel actually lived in Elam according to [Daniel 8:2](#).

We know that ultimately Elam (Persia) will ally with [Magog](#), which is believed to be [Russia](#). ([Ez.38:5](#))

[“You will say, ‘I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates’– to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land.”](#) [Ezekiel 38:11-12](#)

There are differing views as to when the Gog/Magog war will

begin, so you would have to really study this out to come up with what you think best aligns with the Scriptures.

Some believe the Gog/Magog War will occur pre-Tribulation while others believe it would occur during the first half of the tribulation. In any case, we know that Iran will fall on the mountains of Israel ([Ez.39:4-5](#)). While Iran and Russia plot and plan for a total victory, [Ezekiel 39:7](#) assures us that God will make His Holy Name known.

Hope for Iranians?

It is so very difficult to live in a nation that does its best to work against God.

Even the United States is becoming more and more secularized and anti-God.

The people of Iran have faced so much oppression, yet God has been working and there have been many conversions to Christianity despite the very real risks.

God can still bless you, even if you find yourself alone.

Parthians, Medes, and Elamites

[“And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia . . .”](#)
[Acts 2:8-9](#)

Who was present on the day of Pentecost in [Acts 2](#)?

Medes and Elamites!

Persians! Iranians!

Jesus told His disciples to wait on Him, to wait on the Promise of the Father. And they did: from every nation, tribe,

and tongue.

Similarly today, we await the Blessed Hope! He will return for all of us who believe and have placed our trust in Messiah Jesus!

[“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ . . .”](#)
[Titus 2:11-13](#)

Place your trust in Him today! The fulfillment of so many Biblical prophecies in Isaiah, Daniel and Ezekiel prove that He will soon return! Are you ready for His return? Are you ready to meet Him in the air? If you would like to know more about Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ), please send us a message. We would love to hear from you!

Review: Amplified Journal the Word Bible from Zondervan

*As part of the Zondervan blogger program, I have received a copy of the [Zondervan Amplified “Journal the Word” Bible](#) published by [Zondervan Bibles](#)/Harper Collins Publishers at no cost to me in exchange for an honest review here on the Adonai Shalom USA blog. **#zondervanpartner***

- [Amplified Journal the Word Bible Book Review & Description](#)
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- [A Bible for Personal Study](#)
- [My recommendation:](#)
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[Amplified Journal the Word Bible](#) **Book Review & Description**

The [Zondervan Amplified Journal the Word Bible](#) uses the popular Amplified translation of the Biblical text. This particular edition allows ample space so that those who enjoy taking notes in the margins or even drawing and doodling can have room to truly personalize their copy of the Holy Scriptures.



The Amplified version is nice because this translation inserts notes to help define key words and phrases in Scripture that are otherwise misunderstood or overlooked due to difficulties in transition from the original Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew. The brackets and parentheses help to ensure that none of these notes are mistaken as actual Scripture, which is critical because [Revelation 22:18](#) sternly warns us to never add to the actual Scriptures. **The purpose of the Amplified Bible is to add understanding**, not to add erroneous text, and I believe it fulfills its mission in a helpful way for those wanting to delve deeper into the original meaning of the text.



From the back cover book jacket: *“The Amplified Bible translation delivers enhanced understanding of the rich nuances and shades of meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew words in Scripture. Using a unique system of brackets, parentheses, and italics, the Amplified Bible defines and expands key words and phrases within the text of Scripture. In this way, the fuller meaning of God’s Word unfolds, verse by verse, as you read.”*



I immediately noticed the beautiful Leathersoft (TM) cover. The size of this Bible is perfect for personal devotionals.



It features two satin ribbon bookmarks and it lays flat when open, which is ideal for serious notetakers!



[Zondervan Bibles](#)

The [Zondervan Amplified Journal the Word Bible](#) uses 9.5-point font which is very readable. [Zondervan](#) Bibles are always of the highest quality and you will not be disappointed with this Bible.



A Bible for Personal Study

The [Zondervan Amplified Journal the Word Bible](#) is excellent for personal study. It is not; however, a “study Bible” in that this Bible does not contain notes, commentary, concordances, nor maps. The Amplified translation intends for the reader to gather insights from the amplified text which does contain elements that could be considered commentary. Immediately following the ending of the New Testament in Revelation, there are additional pages for personal notes.



The [Zondervan Amplified Journal the Word Bible](#) does contain an “Explanation of General Format” to help those unfamiliar with the Amplified version to understand how the features work within the text:



I personally enjoy anything that helps to further explain the

original meanings, so I like the Amplified Version. The only thing I could suggest to make this particular [Journal the Word Bible](#) even better would be if there were further textual commentary included on each page.

My recommendation:

★★★★★

Rating: 5 out of 5.

The [Zondervan Amplified Journal the Word Bible](#) deserves a **5 out of 5**.

This high-quality Amplified version of the Bible is suitable for anyone who enjoys writing notes or drawing in the margins of their personal devotional Bible. It would make a wonderful gift for the artists and creative people in your life who love God's Word!

Rev. Jennifer Mieliulis Fuentes, *M.Div., Duke University*

Book details

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Daniel 4: Nebuchadnezzar is humbled before the True King

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- [Daniel 4:34-37](#)
- [A lesson for us today](#)

In the [previous chapter](#), King Nebuchadnezzar witnessed the miracle of the 3 Judean youth unharmed despite being thrown into Babylon's fiery furnace.

King Nebuchadnezzar now addresses everyone and decides to acknowledge God's wondrous works:

[Daniel 4:1-9](#)

["Nebuchadnezzar the king,](#)

[To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:](#)

[Peace be multiplied to you.](#)

² [I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the](#)

Most High God has worked for me.

³ How great are His signs,
And how mighty His wonders!
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And His dominion is from generation to generation.

⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing
in my palace. ⁵ I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the
thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled
me. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. ⁸ 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: ⁹ “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.” (Daniel 4:1-9,
emphases added)

King Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges a difference between his god and Daniel’s “Holy” God.

Verse 2: “I thought it good...” In the NIV, “It is my **pleasure**
to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the
Most High God has performed for me.”, (emphasis added). Daniel
attributes the miraculous signs and wonders to the Most High
God – hierarchically using terminology that makes the claim
that his God is above all other gods.

King Nebuchadnezzar describes another dream

Daniel 4:10-12

¹⁰ “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.

¹¹ The tree grew and became strong;
Its height reached to the heavens,
And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.

¹² 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.” (Daniel 4:10-12)

Daniel 4:4 describes how Nebuchadnezzar was flourishing. This dream appears to be describing King Nebuchadnezzar’s current situation at the height of his reign – he is like a tall, strong tree that provides for the kingdom in abundance.

Daniel 4:13

A message from above:

¹³ “I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. (Daniel 4:13)

In Deuteronomy, the Bible describes another time when holy

ones came down:

²He said,

“The LORD came from Sinai

and dawned from Seir upon us;

he shone forth from Mount Paran;

He came from the ten thousands of holy ones,

with flaming fire at His right hand.” (Deuteronomy 33:2, ESV)

Daniel 4:14-15

The tree will be chopped down

¹⁴He 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.

¹⁵Nevertheless 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.” (Daniel 4:14-15), *emphasis added*

Verse 15 reveals and confirms that the tree does indeed represent King Nebuchadnezzar with the verse saying, let “him.”

Daniel 4:16-17

Man to Beast

“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.’” (Daniel 4:16-17)

The watchers from the heavenly court have made a very strong decree so that “the living may know that the Most High rules . . . “: King Nebuchadnezzar’s heart will be transformed from that of a man to an animal.

And 7 times will pass.

Most interpret these 7 to be a literal 7 years. 7, again, symbolizes “completion.” In the completion of time, the fullness of time.

Daniel 4:18

¹⁸ “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 to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you.” (Daniel 4:18)

King Nebuchadnezzar now expects Daniel to give the interpretation! He recognizes that the Spirit of the Holy God is in Daniel.

Daniel 4:19-26

Daniel did indeed receive the interpretation of the dream, but he was very startled by it:

¹⁹ “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!

²⁰ “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, ²¹ 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— ²² 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.

²³ “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’; ²⁴ this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: ²⁵ 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.

²⁶ “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.

The purpose of the coming trial for King Nebuchadnezzar is for him to “come to know that Heaven rules.” King Nebuchadnezzar had a court, but the court of heaven is far superior to that of Babylon.

In [Daniel 4:20](#), the tree is described similarly to the Tower of Babel: having height reaching to the heavens:

[Genesis 11:1-4](#) Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. ² And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. ³ Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. ⁴ And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

King Nebuchadnezzar had the same ambitious spirit.

The tree is to be chopped down, but the stump left in tact and bound up with iron and bronze.

In [Daniel 2](#), iron and bronze represented Rome and Greece, respectively. The Babylonian Empire would remain intertwined – rooted – and even so much as bound up – together with the empires that would follow. Rather than displaying its power and might freely, Babylon would be confined.

Daniel 4:27

²⁷ “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.”

Daniel gives King Nebuchadnezzar some valuable advice: seek righteousness and mercy to break the power of sin in his life. Looking ahead to [Daniel 4:29](#), we see that God gave King Nebuchadnezzar a full year to repent!

Daniel 4:28-33

²⁸ “All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹ At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. ³⁰ 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?”

³¹ 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! ³² 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.”

³³ 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.”

King Nebuchadnezzar was afflicted with what modern psychologists call “boanthropy.” This is a mental disorder

that causes its victim to believe he is an ox or a cow. But I think King Nebuchadnezzar had it even worse. I haven't seen anybody have hair like eagle's feathers and nails like claws. God allowed him to experience a pit of shame. Sometimes that's what it takes to get us to not think so highly of ourselves. His pride as Babylon's leader had to be stripped away.

From [1 Peter 5:5](#); . . . ["God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."](#)

We must pray for God's mercy, that we will always remain humble no matter what position we find ourselves in whether it is in ministry or a secular job or any type of leadership.

[Daniel 4:34-37](#)

[³⁴ 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.](#)

[³⁵ 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?"](#)

[³⁶ 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. ³⁷ 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."](#)

Once the set time had been fulfilled, Nebuchadnezzar looked up

to heaven and his understanding and reason was given back to him.

Notice he acknowledged Daniel's God. Nebuchadnezzar ["blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever . . ." \(Daniel 4:34\)](#). He continued on, in a prayerful manner, confessing God's dominion and power.

[Daniel 4:36](#) tells us that for the glory of King Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, God allowed his honor and splendor to return to him. King Nebuchadnezzar extolled and honored God as the true King.

A lesson for us today

Pride sets itself up so very quickly, and when a person has access to privilege and material possessions, it can be a challenge to remain humble.

Our King Jesus demonstrated humility, as we talked about on Palm Sunday. May the Lord help each of us to always remain humble and give God all the glory in our lives!

The Resurrection: Where is Jesus?!

- [The Empty Tomb: Jesus rose from the dead!](#)
- [John's Resurrection Account:](#)
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The Empty Tomb: Jesus rose from the dead!

John's Resurrection Account:

[“Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”](#)

[³ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. ⁴ So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵ And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in.](#)

[⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.” John](#)

[20:1-10](#)

We've been talking a bit about [Lazarus](#). Lazarus needed someone to pray for him and he ended up being resurrected, but Jesus – He could resurrect Himself!

Now today, we see that the Bible says (John 20:9) that the disciples “as yet did not know the Scripture that He must rise again...” The lesson in that for us is, let's make sure we know the Scriptures so we are never caught off guard and we can attest to the reality that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead!

Conquering Fear

The resurrection is as much about new life as it is about conquering fear.

It is because of the resurrection that Paul could say:

[“O Death, where is your sting?](#)

[O Hades, where is your victory?” 1 Cor.15:55](#)

When I served as a chaplain, I saw death every day.

Some people were ready to confront that reality while others were definitely not.

Those who had lived for Jesus and had professed a consistent faith in Christ were ready. Even when pain would come, believers have a peace and a preparedness, knowing that death is no longer final and that

[Psalm 116:15 “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.”](#)

But fear grips that heart of so many.

One night at the hospital, there was a man there who essentially refused to repent. From what I could tell, he

didn't believe in Jesus, heaven, or hell and he was experiencing genuine agony. Excruciating pain coupled with absolute fear.

When a person has never experienced a life-changing encounter with Jesus, they will fear death in an often terrifying way.

The disciples would have been terrified, too.

They were targets after the crucifixion. Peter denied Jesus for a reason. These people were scared out of their minds!

Their hopes that somehow Jesus would miraculously escape being put to death had been crushed.

They didn't know that death could be defeated with finality. Yes, Lazarus had been raised up, but a lasting, victorious eternal resurrection . . . they didn't know that was possible.

The disciples were in hiding. It was probably actually safer for the women to go to the tomb!

But Mary went to the tomb while it was still dark. She was eager and probably couldn't sleep, but she, like Nicodemus going to visit Jesus under cover of darkness, took advantage of the darkness to go out.

Mary Magdalene's discovery at the tomb

[John 20:2 "Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."](#)

They have taken away the Lord!

At first glance, it seems Mary immediately blames Rome.

Could it be? The empire has done this.

Those wicked soldiers have taken away her dearest Jesus.

After all, it is easy to cast blame when we are upset.

But Luke's Gospel fills in more details about the Resurrection. Let's turn to [Luke 24](#).

Luke's Resurrection Account

[“Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³ Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.](#)

[⁴ And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’ ”](#)

[⁸ And they remembered His words. ⁹ Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹ And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.” \(Luke 24:1-10\).](#)

Mary was with Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women. They had brought prepared spices for the body of Jesus.

They've taken the body?

Who?

The angels?

Mary and her friends were "greatly perplexed" ([verse 4](#)) about where the body could be.

And then the 2 angels appear and ask the perfect question:

"Why do you seek the living among the dead? And they reminded the women of Jesus' words.

But the women still don't grasp this fully because John says they came back saying that they didn't know where the body was lain.

Between the shock of it all and having just received an angelic visitation, the women's story when they came back sounded like gibberish to the men. They have all been traumatized.

Jesus was killed in the most excruciating way possible, crucified on that cross, then He was buried, and now nobody knows where He is.

He's wanted dead or alive.

Where is Jesus?

Where is the body?

Peter

But Peter, he had been through enough in the past few hours, he knew he should go to that tomb. See what is going on.

He sees the folded handkerchief ([John 20:7](#)).

[John 20:9](#) Peter and the women and the other disciples did not yet know the meaning of the Scriptures.

[Luke 24:12](#) Peter marveled to himself about what happened.

Jesus appears to Mary

Overtaken by the emotion of the moment, Mary was weeping. She is just so worried about where this body is at.

Do you ever get so focused on something and people around you or the Holy Spirit is telling you – the answer is before you, but you are so distracted that you don't see it?

God sent angels to Mary and even Jesus Himself and she was still struggling!

[John 20:11-18](#)

[¹¹ But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³ Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"](#)

[She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."](#)

[¹⁴ Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?"](#)

[She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him,](#)

and I will take Him away.”

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Mary!”

She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).

¹⁷ Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’ ”

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

When Mary thought she was talking to a gardener, she still asked Him, “where did you lay the body?” She is willing to take Jesus’ body anywhere else if they would just tell her where it is.

So Jesus meets her where she is at and calls her by name.

And she recognized His voice.

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”
John 10:27

Later that day . . .

The disciples gathered together behind closed and locked doors, “for fear of the Jews.” John 20:19

See, this confirms that they were very fearful.

But Jesus appears.

When you find yourself facing a fear or very anxious, turn to Jesus.

The Resurrected Risen Jesus appeared and said, Shalom. “Peace

be with you.”

He showed them his wounds because He knew they were incapable of having peace until they had seen some physical evidence.

Jesus repeats His blessing – trying to reassure these panicked, fearful disciples.

And then He immediately commissions them.

He didn't give them a day to reflect on what had happened. He immediately sends them out to make more disciples. There is no time to waste. Souls need to be saved.

[John 20:21 “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you”](#)

And Jesus doesn't leave them comfortless.

He doesn't send them out with just a simple Gospel message.

He breathed His very Spirit upon them: [“Receive the Holy Spirit.” \(John 20:22\)](#)

He sends them out with power.

You need the Holy Spirit. The same power that raised up Jesus from the grave.

[John 20:23](#) has been taken out of context at times because it seems a little confusing. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them, if you retain the sins of any, they are retained. This has to do with the responsibility that Jesus' disciples have to preach the Gospel to the world. A person who has never heard the Gospel cannot receive life-saving forgiveness. Only God has the power to forgive.

[John 2:24-25 “Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.”](#)

[So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of](#)

the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

When Jesus was in the room, and showed them His hands and His side, Thomas wasn't there.

Don't miss God.

Why wasn't Thomas around?

Sometimes people stop going to church, they are no longer accountable, or for various reasons whether it's past hurts or fears or judgmentalism, they just stop attending. They don't gather with believers, even though [Hebrews 10:25](#) tells us to never neglect the assembling together because we are encouraged when we are together.

Was Thomas too afraid to be there?

Did Thomas already lose his faith, just completely devastated that Jesus was dead?

That was fast. Some people don't have unshakable faith. You gotta get to a place where you have unshakable faith.

Doubting Thomas wants to see a sign – and ironically he requests to see the print of the nails and feel the wounds of his hand and side. But Jesus already showed that. Thomas missed the mark.

Thomas wasn't there to receive the Holy Spirit. He missed out.

Don't be the one who misses out.

The Resurrection changed everything

Had Jesus never risen from the dead, we would be without hope.

The resurrection changed everything!

Let the reality of the resurrection breathe new life into you today. Meditate on the awesomeness that Jesus has power over the grave, and you, too, will one day rise to be with the Lord!

We know something that not everyone knows.

Like the disciples who encounter the Risen Jesus, we have a testimony that people need to hear.

It's that age-old question. Where is Jesus? Who is Jesus?

Maybe you are someone who has heard the Gospel many times, but you need to regroup and regain the sense of awe and power that the Gospel should have over your life.

1 Corinthians 1:18: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

Before Lazarus was raised from the dead, Martha was unsure that Jesus could do anything.

But

John 11:25-26: "Jesus said to [Martha], 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'"

Martha believed in a resurrection, on the last day. But Jesus said, we don't need to wait for the last day. If you know me and if you believe my Words, lives can be resurrected right here right now.

So today, let it be our prayer: Lord, increase our faith!

Lord, make your Gospel real to me!

Lord, let me know the power of the Good News! That I would be motivated by the Gospel to share with others this glorious news!

Lord, make known to me – in a tangible way – who You are.

So that when the question is asked, Who is Jesus and where is He? He is here and His Spirit dwells within you and me and

Jesus is very much alive! He is risen, He is risen indeed!

Hallelujah!