**Shaking Kingdoms**

***17****Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, 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 kingship and greatness and glory and majesty.****19****And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled.****20****But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him.****21****He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will.****22****And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this,****23****but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in 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, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.*

***24****“Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed.****25****And this is the writing that was inscribed: Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin.****26****This is the interpretation of the matter: Mene, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end;****27****Tekel, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting;****28****Peres, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”*

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

***30****That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed.****31****And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old. (Daniel 5:17-30, ESV)*

God has given us gifts to shake the world for His glory. Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters as we talk today about shaking kingdoms. Today, there aren’t many literal political kingdoms left. In the spiritual world, however, all of it functions on a monarchical structure. God is the King, and we are his children, his servants, his friends, and his soldiers with all our various abilities. Depending on what gifts He has given and in what fields, we have been granted a corresponding position in our Heavenly Father’s kingdom (as His believer-children in His Son). Therefore, today we are going to talk about this idea of “shaking.” What does it mean to shake the kingdoms of the world? Again, God has given us His gifts to shake the world for His glory – so let us talk about this mission…

 When God’s gifts are used correctly and with the right heart, profound changes happen in our lives. God’s people at the time, who were Israelites and their non-Hebrew servants, were in a terrible state of exile when the event recorded in Daniel’s book occurred. The prophet had already spent a considerable amount of time in the palace of the kingdom under the rule of mostly Nebuchadnezzar and was mostly likely advanced in age. His faith had gotten stronger through the victories that God had granted him and his three young Hebrew friends. We could say that the prophet Daniel knew his gift well and used it as it was appropriate for a man of God. Everybody knew, even among the pagan royal family members, that Daniel had the “holy spirit of the gods” within him. They recognized at their own spiritual level that Daniel was clearly different than the other magi and astrologers. Daniel’s gift had become a means for people to receive help from him, and through him, to get acquainted with his God. The way he dealt with this new king, however, betrayed that Daniel had become tired of holding lofty positions in the palace. He was so fearless that he revealed God’s fearful message to the Babylonian king without even flinching.

 This is like someone who is very seasoned in their work. If it is a doctor, they make their diagnoses much more surely because they have seen the same symptoms a thousand times, compared to a complete newbie. Or, this could be like an experienced teacher, who by reason of the many years of teaching, is able to answer students’ strange questions more easily, having heard all kinds of questions throughout the years.

 In this case, we also are called to have the same trust in God as we use our gifts wherever we are. If you are or have been a teacher, continue to use the gift that God has given you. If you are a physician, be ready to help wherever you find yourself. If you are a preacher or evangelist, always be ready to use your gift. If you are gifted in governing, or you are something completely different like a musician by gifting, use what you have been granted and do not shrink back when you are invited to use your skills in important places and before kings and rulers.

 Every establishment is a microcosm of a kingdom. Every kingdom can benefit from your gifts. Even when using your gift seems inconvenient or even out of place, when you are invited to use it, just be and do what you are called to do by God. Do not change or stifle your gift, because it is God who has given it to you.

 Just as Daniel’s interpretation of the king’s dream clarified (and factored into?) the fall of the Babylonian kingdom, your gift can bring great changes into your family life, your workplace, among your friends, and even in your country.

 May the Lord give each of us the awareness to continually use our gifts. The Lord bless you all. Amen.