

# Supremacy of God Pt. 3

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, October 25, 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today! Whether you are here in person or watching via the livestream, you are most welcome. Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes. We have much to cover in a relatively short amount of time.

## SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

We are in the midst of a multi-part series on the supremacy of God. By supremacy I mean that God is “superior to all others in authority, power and status.” His supremacy—as we have noted time and again—is particularly evident in His dominion and mastery over all things. Simply put: “Our God Reigns!”

**Q. What does the Lord have dominion, mastery and rulership over? As we have noted...**

- A1)** God has supremacy over the spiritual realm (dominion over satanic or demonic forces)
- A2)** God has supremacy over the natural realm (dominion over earthly elements and forces)
- A3)** God has supremacy over human sickness and disease (able to reverse disease and heal)
- A4)** God has supremacy over the power of life and death (able to reverse death; grant life)
- A5)** God has supremacy over the nations and their leaders (God reigns high and exalted)

**FYI** – It was this final aspect of God’s supremacy that I drew particular attention to...

### Isaiah 40:15, 23–24 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

15 Surely the **nations** are like a drop in a bucket;  
they are regarded as dust on the scales;  
he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

23 He brings **princes** to naught  
and reduces the **rulers** of this world to nothing.

24 No sooner are they planted,  
no sooner are they sown,  
no sooner do they take root in the ground,  
than he blows on them and they wither,  
and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

### Daniel 2:19b–20a, 21 (Emphasis Mine)

19 . . . Daniel praised the God of heaven 20 and said:

21 He changes times and seasons;  
he **deposes kings** and **raises up others**.

**KEY** – God rules and reigns—i.e., even over the nations and rulers of this earth...

## SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

**NOTE 1** – As we noted last Sunday, this aspect of the supremacy of God is evident in His ability to humble human leaders. Listen to our previous message to hear the story of the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, which dramatically illustrates this principle (i.e., available online).

**NOTE 2** – As we shall note next Sunday, this aspect of the supremacy of God is evident in His ability to raise up human leaders, utilizing them to advance His good purposes in the earth. Make sure that you attend in-person or tune in to our livestream to hear the amazing story of King Cyrus.

**KEY** – This AM I want to explore and evidence the following principle: i.e., God has demonstrated the ability to actively judge and/or remove earthly leaders. To illustrate, I would like to consider a series of three rulers who were judged by God throughout the course of biblical history....

**NOTE 3** – This may be a “dark” topic of biblical study, but we must behold the kindness and the severity of God (cf. Rom. 11:22), giving careful attention to the whole of the Word. Remember that “all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17). Let’s delve in...

## HEROD AGRIPPA I PT. 1

**KEY** – Let us begin our study with the judgment visited upon Herod Agrippa I (cf. Acts 12).

**FYI** – Some historical context is necessary as we wade into these waters. There are several figures who bear the name “Herod” in the Gospels and in the Book of Acts. Remember that Herod is less of a formal name and more of a dynastic title...

### 1) Herod the Great

The first of the “Herods” is often known as Herod the Great. He features in the birth narrative of Christ and is commonly associated with the Christmas story. This Herod sought to discover the location of the Christ-child through the Magi (i.e., that he might kill Jesus and remove this potential threat to his power). Unable to locate the Christ-child, he slaughtered all the boys two-and-under in and around Bethlehem (cf. Matt. 2).

### 2) Herod Antipas

Herod Antipas (Antipater) was one of several sons of Herod the Great. This Herod ruled and reigned over Galilee and the region thereof during the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Christ Himself would stand trial before this Herod prior to His eventual Crucifixion (cf. Luke 23). Perhaps most famously, this was the Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded (cf. Matt. 14).

### 3) Herod Agrippa I

Herod Agrippa I (i.e., the focus of our opening point) was the grandson of Herod the Great. He came to preside over a portion of northern Palestine from A.D. 37–44. I want to read a selection of texts from Acts 12 (wherein we discover the kind of man that Herod Agrippa I was AND the judgment he suffered at the hand of God)...

## HEROD AGRIPPA I PT. 2

### Acts 12:1–3

1 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3 When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also.

#### Q. What do we begin to see herein?

**A1** – We begin to see the type of man that Herod Agrippa I was. He was evidently adversarial to the early church. Verse 1 clearly states that he “arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them.” He was clearly no friend to the people of God!

**A2** – Moreover, the text notes that Herod Agrippa I had “James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword” (v. 2a). This may seem like a passing text, but this is the record of the first apostolic martyr (i.e., the first of the Twelve to be killed for their faith).

**A3** – We should also note that this Herod was a political opportunist. When he came to discover that these actions pleased the Jews (v. 3a), he took steps to seize Peter as well—though Peter would be miraculously rescued through the power of God!

**KEY** – In light of these details let us read on...

## HEROD AGRIPPA I PT. 3

### Acts 12:19b–24

Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. 20 He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. After securing the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king’s country for their food supply.

21 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 22 They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.” 23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. 24 But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.

#### Q. What do we see herein?

### **A1. We witness the danger of human pride...**

#### **Acts 12:21–23**

21 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 22 They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.” 23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

#### **Proverbs 16:18**

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

#### **Matthew 23:12a**

For those who exalt themselves will be humbled . . .

### **A2. We witness the folly of human pride...**

**NOTE** – The people should, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man” in v. 22. Most scholars agree that these words were insincere flattery. i.e., This was likely not genuine praise for Agrippa and his oratory. Rather, they were saying what they needed to say to curry his favor (v. 20). Thus, it is likely that Agrippa died for taking pride in something he was not even good at. He had come to believe his own press!

### **A3. We witness the supremacy of God herein...**

#### **Acts 12:21–23**

21 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 22 They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.” 23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

**KEY** – God has the power to sovereignly judge leaders as He sees fit...

#### **Isaiah 40:23–24**

23 He brings princes to naught  
and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.  
24 No sooner are they planted,  
no sooner are they sown,  
no sooner do they take root in the ground,  
than he blows on them and they wither,  
and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

### **A4. We witness the enduring power of God’s Word...**

#### **Acts 12:24**

24 But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.

#### **Isaiah 40:8**

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

## **JEZEBEL PT. 1**

**KEY** – Let us continue our study with the judgment visited upon Queen Jezebel (cf. 2 Kings 9).

**Q. Who was Jezebel? What type of person (i.e., woman) was she?**

**A.** Jezebel was a power hungry and idolatrous murderess whose name is synonymous with evil...

**NOTE 1** – Jezebel was the wife of King Ahab (i.e., a weak, self-pitying man who abdicated his authority to her).

**NOTE 2** – Jezebel caused idolatry to proliferate in the northern kingdom of Israel, leading many to worship the false god, Baal. Baalism was an ancient cult that tended to destroy manhood and drag womanhood into shame. Does this sound familiar? There is nothing new under the sun (cf. Ecc. 1:9).

**NOTE 3** – In order to advance her idolatry in the nation of Israel, Jezebel worked tirelessly to exterminate the prophets of the One True God (cf. 1 Kings 18:4, 13). Thus said, Jezebel's strongest enemy was the mighty prophet Elijah, who defied her and opposed her evil reign (cf. 1 Kings 17, etc.).

**NOTE 4** – Jezebel had little regard for human life and the citizens she was appointed to protect and serve. Her most appalling act of malice was arranging for the murder of an innocent man named Naboth, that she and Ahab might acquire his property (cf. 1 Kings 21). Keep this event in mind!

**KEY** – Let us skip ahead to the end of her story with the following question...

## **JEZEBEL PT. 2**

**Q. How did this wicked Queen Jezebel die?**

**A.** After many years of evil living and sinister influence...

### **2 Kings 9:30–35**

30 . . . Jehu [i.e., newly anointed king of Israel] went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she put on eye makeup, arranged her hair and looked out of a window. 31 As Jehu entered the gate, she asked, "Have you come in peace . . . you murderer of your master?" [FYI – Jehu had just killed the previous king (i.e., Joram son of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel)].

32 He looked up at the window and called out, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. 33 "Throw her down!" Jehu said. So they threw her down, and some of her blood splattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot.

34 Jehu went in and ate and drank. "Take care of that cursed woman," he said, "and bury her, for she was a king's daughter." 35 But when they went out to bury her, they found nothing except her skull, her feet and her hands.

## JEZEBEL PT. 3

**NOTE 1** – Now you may be saying to yourself: “Pastor, I don’t quite see the hand of God in this. His judgment was clear in the case of Herod Agrippa I, but this text is clear that she was killed by eunuchs who tossed her out of an open window.

**Q. How does this account demonstrate the supremacy of God?”**

**NOTE 2** – Great question—to which I say the following: read the rest of the text...

### **2 Kings 9:34–37 (Emphasis Mine)**

34 Jehu went in and ate and drank. “Take care of that cursed woman,” he said, “and bury her, for she was a king’s daughter.” 35 But when they went out to bury her, **they found nothing except her skull, her feet and her hands.** 36 They went back and told Jehu, who said, **“This is the word of the Lord that he spoke through his servant Elijah the Tishbite: On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs will devour Jezebel’s flesh. 37 Jezebel’s body will be like dung on the ground in the plot at Jezreel, so that no one will be able to say, ‘This is Jezebel.’”**

YOU SEE...

**KEY** – Years earlier, following the murder of the previously mentioned Naboth, God promised through Elijah that Jezebel would meet a horrific end. Namely, God declared that Jezebel’s body would be devoured by dogs on a specific plot of ground in Jezreel (cf. 1 Kings 21:23)—and this is precisely what happened!

**Q. What do we see herein?**

**A1.** We witness the danger and folly of human pride...

**KEY** – Jezebel ruled for decades in open rebellion to the Lord and His ways. For this she was judged greatly...

### **Proverbs 16:18**

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

### **Matthew 23:12a**

For those who exalt themselves will be humbled . . .

**A2.** We witness the supremacy of God (i.e., judgement of earthly leaders)

**KEY** – Jezebel believed herself to be above all power and dominion as Queen. She was not above THE King!

**A3.** We witness the faithfulness of God in keeping His Word

### **Numbers 23:19**

19 God is not human, that he should lie,  
not a human being, that he should change his mind.  
Does he speak and then not act?  
Does he promise and not fulfill?

## BELSHAZZAR PT. 1

**KEY** – Let us conclude our study with the judgment visited upon King Belshazzar (cf. Daniel 5).

**Q. Who was Belshazzar? What do we know about this earthly monarch?**

- A1.** Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar (i.e., a king that we addressed at length last Sunday).
- A2.** Belshazzar was the last king of ancient Babylon (i.e., an ancient empire that we addressed last Sunday).
- A3.** Belshazzar reigned for a short time during the life of Daniel (i.e., a ‘prophet’ that we noted last Sunday).

**NOTE** – Let us consider the judgment this ruler experienced at the hand of almighty God...

## BELSHAZZAR PT. 2

### Daniel 5:1–4

1 King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. 2 While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father [lit. “ancestor”] had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. 3 So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. 4 As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

**Q. What do we discern re: this ruler?**

- A1.** We discern that he was an idolatrous figure (see v. 4)...

### Daniel 5:4 (Emphasis Mine)

4 As they drank the wine, they praised the **gods of gold** and **silver**, of **bronze, iron, wood** and **stone**.

- A2.** We discern that he was idolatrous despite the experiences of his grandfather...

**NOTE** – Remember that Nebuchadnezzar had come to a genuine humility before the Lord (cf. Dan 4). However, it would appear that the godly faith and submission of his close ancestor had little impact upon the faith and dedication of this man. Tragic!

- A3.** We discern that he had little regard for the sacred things of the Lord (see. v. 2b–4)...

### Daniel 5:2–4 (Emphasis Mine)

2 While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father [lit. “ancestor”] had taken **from the temple in Jerusalem**, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines **might drink from them**. 3 So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the **temple of God** in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines **drank** from them. 4 **As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.**

**KEY** – That which was sacred and dedicated unto the Lord was used in the celebration of false gods!

## BELSHAZZAR PT. 3

**Q. What takes place next?**

**A. It is lengthy but worth the read...**

### **Daniel 5:5–30**

5 Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. 6 His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking.

7 The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers and diviners. Then he said to these wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom." 8 Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. 9 So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled.

10 The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. "May the king live forever!" she said. "Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale! 11 There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. Your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. 12 He did this because Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means."

13 So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, "Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah? 14 I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom. 15 The wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it. 16 Now I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom." 17 Then Daniel answered the king, "You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.

18 "Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. 19 Because of the high position he gave him, all the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. 20 But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. 21 He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and sets over them anyone he wishes.

22 "But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. 23 Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. 24 Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.

25 “This is the inscription that was written: mene, mene, tekel, parsin

26 “Here is what these words mean:

Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.

27 Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

28 Peres: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

29 Then at Belshazzar’s command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom. 30 That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, 31 and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

### **BELSHAZZAR PT. 4**

#### **Q. What do we see in this account?**

**A1.** We witness the danger and folly of human pride...

**KEY** – He had opportunity to humble himself and rejected that opportunity (v. 22). Therefore, he was judged...

#### **Proverbs 16:18**

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

**A2.** We witness the supremacy of God (i.e., judgment of earthly leaders and nations).

**KEY** – By the end of this very night, the king was dead a new power would ascend (i.e., Medo-Persians)...

**QUOTE** – “That night, the Persians invaded. The king of Medo-Persia broke through the supposedly impenetrable wall of Babylon by cleverly diverting the river flowing into the city so that his soldiers could enter through the river duct. Historical records show that this invasion was made possible because the entire city was involved in a great feast—the feast of Belshazzar mentioned in Daniel 5. ‘That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom’ (Daniel 5:29–30). The demise of King Belshazzar illustrates the truth of Proverbs 16:18, “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”

**A3.** We witness—again—the faithfulness of God in keeping His Word...

Numbers 23:19

19 God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

**A4.** We witness the power of God over all things (earthly, spiritual and beyond)...

**KEY** – The name of the king (i.e., Belshazzar) literally means “Bel protect the king.” It is a prayer to the Babylonian god, Bel, seeking protection over this earthly monarch. Clearly, Bel was powerless to save this evil ruler, as God is reigns supreme over all things!

## APPLICATIONS

In closing, we do well to hear and heed the principles revealed in this sermon...

- 1) There is a Danger and Folly in Pride
- 2) God is Faithful to His Word (Commitment to Fulfill)
- 3) What God has Done Before He Can Do Again (Judgment on Leaders)
- 4) What God has Done Before He Can Do Again (Judgment on Nations & People Grps)

## CONCLUSION PT. 1

- 1) **Children's Church** – Training After Service Today Upon Dismissal (Volunteers Take Note/CORI's, etc.)
- 2) **Children's Church** – Set to Resume on Sunday Morning, November 1 (i.e., for Children Ages 4–12)
- 3) **Operation Christmas Child** – Boxes are Available for those Who Wish to Participate (i.e., Ruth)
- 4) **Membership** – I am Open to Hosting a Membership Class for Interested Parties (See Me)

## CONCLUSION PT. 2

**KEY** – Thank you for taking the time to join us today. Should those of you who have joined us online wish to give, please do so through the giving portal of our church WEBSITE ([www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org)). For those who are present, you may place your donation in the OFFERING BOXES in this Sanctuary.

### Numbers 6:24–26

- 24 The Lord bless you  
and keep you;
- 25 the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;
- 26 the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.