

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

This evening, we continue our study through the book of Daniel.

We are going to go over another memorable event detailed for us in this wonderful book.

Not only are we going to continue to see God's sovereignty, we are also going to see that He is true to His word.

The dream that the Lord gave to Nebuchadnezzar in chapter two, the one with the image made out of the different materials – God is going to make Babylon, the head of gold – history just as He had said He would.

Let's pray...

Last week in chapter four, we saw King Nebuchadnezzar's conversion.

He finally acknowledged God's sovereignty

And we read how Nebuchadnezzar had to learn it the hard way as he went mad for a period of seven years as God humbled him to demonstrate this.

So, Nebuchadnezzar continued to reign after God returned his reason back to him and restored his kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar reigned for a total of 43 years until he died.

Over the next 23 years there was instability within the monarchy as the descendants of Nebuchadnezzar often fought and assassinated each other on their way to the throne.

So we have 43 years that Neb reign and 23 more years that his descendants reigned = 66 years.

Turn with me to Jeremiah 25

**[Jer 25:12 NKJV] 12 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, [that] I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.**

Judgment is coming to Babylon.

Before we start, I also need to mention that chapter 5 is out of order chronologically. Chapter seven and eight come before chapter five.

**[Dan 5:1-31 NKJV] 1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand.**

I asked you to make a note of the name Belshazzar.

And the reason being that for many years, people would question the authenticity of the book of Daniel because they claimed that there was no historical evidence that Babylon had a king by that name.

However, there was historical evidence that the last king of Babylon was named Nabonidus not Belshazzar.

In their eyes, this disproved the book of Daniel, until archaeologist discovered a clay cylinder naming Belshazzar as the oldest and favorite son of Nabonidus.

Why is this significant, because Nabonidus and Belshazzar both reigned Babylon during this time.

Belshazzar is also Nebuchadnezzar's grandson and this is significant because it also fulfills another one of God's promises that stated that the destruction of Babylon would come during his reign.

**[Jer 27:6-7 NKJV] 6 'And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. 7 'So all nations shall serve him and his son and his **son's son**, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them.**

And here in verse one we find Belshazzar throwing a party for himself and many of his friends while Babylon is surrounded by the Medes and the Persians.

Babylon was at war with the Medes and the Persians during this time and they had suffered defeat after defeat at their hands.

But Belshazzar and the kingdom of Babylon had a false sense of security.

And the reason that they could celebrate was that Babylon was fortified with enormous walls and impenetrable gates and it had the great Euphrates River running right through the middle of the city.

Usually when a nation invaded another nation during this time, they would encircle them and starve them out.

No resources go into the city and no one can come out.

But Babylon was so huge that historians point out that they had farms within the city walls and they would be able to sustain a siege for up to 20 years.

**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.**

When we started the book of Daniel, I made mention that Nebuchadnezzar made several sieges into Jerusalem before he destroyed it along with the temple.

Daniel and his friends were taken captive after the first siege along with some of the articles that were in the temple.

And these articles were usually placed in their own pagan temples as they showed them off as their war trophies.

So, these trophies have been sitting around for a while and now Belshazzar wants to incorporate them into his party. He wants to drink from them.

I had you make a note of the word father – because in Aramaic and in Hebrew, there is no word for grandfather.

**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.**

These vessels were built solely for the purpose of worshipping God.

And now, Belshazzar and his friends are using them to worship their false gods.

This was an act of open defiance and blasphemes against God declaring that the gods of Babylon were more powerful.

This was Belshazzar declaring that Babylon was impregnable and indestructible.

And all of this was happening as judgment approaching.

Turn with me to Matt 24,

**[Mat 24:37-39 NKJV] 37 "But as the days of Noah [were], so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.**

In the last days, people will ignore the warnings, they too will have a false sense of security - and judgment will come suddenly and unexpectedly.

**And as Belshazzar is partying, God gets his attention.**

**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.**

As the party continues a hand appears and starts to write on the wall.

With Nebuchadnezzar, God got his attention through dreams and with Belshazzar, it is with a hand.

This is where we get the phrase the writing on the wall –

Think of “thing” from the Adam’s Family. But it is not thing writing on the wall, it is God.

The king saw it – with his eyes.

Many times, God gives us clear evidence that He is trying to get our attention. But we have to respond.

When Egypt was going through the various plagues, the magicians tell Pharaoh that the finger of God is behind the plagues (Ex 8:19) but because his heart was hardened Pharaoh didn't see it.

**6 Then the king's countenance changed (he sobered up really quick), 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."**

Belshazzar was terrified at what he saw.

And I find it interesting that he was so terrified yet, he did not even understand the message that was written on the wall???

You see it was his own conscience that testified against him over what he was doing.

He knew what he had been doing – he knew that it was wrong.

And because he was terrified, just like Nebuchadnezzar, he calls out on the Chaldeans and the magicians to help interpret the message.

I asked you to make a note that he offered whoever could interpret the message the position of third ruler.

And the reason he offered up third ruler was because he was second ruler since his father was first ruler. That was the best he could offer.

**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.**

We are not told why they couldn't read the writing on the wall.

Some say it could have been written in Hebrew? We don't know.

It could also be that God put a veil over their eyes to prevent them from being able to read it.

**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."**

This queen – this is probably either Belshazzar's mother or his grandmother – the wife of Nebuchadnezzar.

Now, notice that she wasn't at the party where all this is taking place. There is something different about her.

And she lets the king know that there is someone in the kingdom who can interpret the writing on the wall and he has already proven himself.

And she gives Belshazzar his Hebrew name as well as his Aramaic name.

**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 is brought before the king.

Now, if he was taken captive in his teens, this means that Daniel is in his 80's now.

He is probably retired from working in the royal court.

And after verifying his identity, the king proceeds to tell Daniel the problem.

The king did not have a relationship with Daniel. It appears that everything that he knew from Daniel was from hearsay from the queen.

And he makes the same promise to Daniel that he will be greatly rewarded if he provides the interpretation.

**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."**

In our study last week, Daniel was troubled when he had to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar the dream that he had in chapter four.

However, here in chapter five, it appears that Daniel has no problem giving the bad news to Belshazzar.

You can keep your reward Belshazzar – however, I am still going to give you the bad news.

**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.**

Before Daniel interprets the writing, he offers up an indictment to Belshazzar.

He rebukes him for failing to learn from his grandfather's rebellion to defy God.

He reminds him that he was accountable in knowing that it was God who had put his grandfather on the throne in the first place.

He reminds him that he was accountable for knowing that God had humbled his grandfather.

You see church, one of the lessons that we must learn is that we don't have to be humiliated to learn humility.

We can learn from the examples of others.

That is what Daniel is telling Belshazzar – you failed to learn from the example of your grandfather – and now you will be humiliated.

**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.**

Here Daniel rebukes him for his own rebellion to defy God.

He is accountable in learning the lessons from his grandfather but he is also accountable for his own actions.

And he blasphemed God by bringing in the vessels and drinking from them in complete defiance.

**24 "Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written. 25 "And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.**

Three different words were written on the wall. The meaning of the particular words isn't the issue, it's the significance that's not understood.

**26 "This [is] the interpretation of [each] word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;**

Belshazzar – the days of you being king are coming to an end.

The days of Babylon ruling are also coming to an end. The seventy years are done.

The word is repeated for emphasis.

**27 "TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting;**

God knows everything that you have done – and it isn't measuring up to God's holiness.

This is the same thing that Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar when he revealed to him that he was going to lose his kingdom – because he knew that God was going to judge him for what he had done.

Turn with me to 1 Sam 2,

In first Samuel 2 we have Hannah's prayer

**[1Sa 2:3 NKJV] 3 "Talk no more so very proudly; Let no arrogance come from your mouth, For the LORD [is] the God of knowledge; And by Him actions are weighed.**

**28 "PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."**

the original word was "upharsin", which is just another form of this root word which means "to break in two, divide"

**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.**

Now, notice that Belshazzar doesn't repent.

Knowing the judgment was eminent – he decides to reward Daniel by making him the third ruler of the kingdom even though that very night his reign was going to come to an end.

**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.**

That very night the city of Babylon fell.

Now, how did Babylon fall???

The Greek historian, Herodotus tells us that -

The Persian King Cyrus had been engineering an ingenious plan for Babylon's fall.

He had split his army in half, part on the north of the city, part on the south, both near the water's edge.

They were under orders to march in to the city when the river became crossable.

He had had his army build a canal to the north of the city, and when he gave the command, the river Euphrates was diverted through the canal, into a nearby lake.

As the river subsided, the army flowed in from both sides through the gates in the river.

**The amazing thing is that river gates were left unlocked.**

Because Babylon wasn't expecting the army to ever get in, everything was left unguarded, and the city surrendered without a fight.

Amazingly enough, this was all prophesied earlier by the prophet Isaiah:

**[Isa 45:1-4 NKJV] 1 "Thus says the LORD to His anointed, To **Cyrus**, whose right hand I have held--To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut: 2 'I will go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron. 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the**

LORD, Who call [you] by your name, [Am] the God of Israel. 4 For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, **I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.**

God is the one who opened the doors for the Medes and the Persians.

Not only does God word show us how Cyrus enters Babylon – remember it was an impenetrable city. God also gives us the name of the one who was going to conquer Babylon. Cyrus.

Isaiah wrote this prophesy 100 years before Cyrus was even born.

**Let's pray.**

