

Daniel – Series Two
Belshazzar’s Feast
Daniel Five
Lesson XIV
July 15, 2009

I Brief Review of the Historical Chapters

Chapter one – Daniel, the Jew, taken a captive to Babylon

Chapter two – Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon receives a vision of world governments

Chapter three The Jews are preserved in the fire.

Chapter four The Gentile king goes mad for seven years

Chapter five - The last king of Babylon is suddenly judged by God

Chapter six Daniel the Jew is preserved in the Lions Den and when delivered becomes a greater leader than before.

In the Book of Daniel we have the historic beginning and prophetic ending of the Times of the Gentiles. Weaved into this history we have repeated pictures of the preservation, then exaltation of the Jews. The same God who preserved and exalted the few has committed Himself to a preservation and final exaltation of the whole Nation of Israel.

II Daniel Chapter Five introduces us to Belshazzar

I quote John F. Wolvoord (Daniel page 116)

Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C.

There are approximately 23 years between chapters 4 and 5 of Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach, also known as Amal-Marcuk, who was killed in 560 B.C. He was followed by Neriglissor, also spelled Nergal-shar-asar, a son in law of Nebuchadnezzar who died in 556 B.C. of natural causes. Belshazzar is best identified as his son, whose mother was either the wife or daughter of Nebuchadnezzar.”

III Daniel 5:1-4 Describes the Feast prepared by Belshazzar.

The Bible tells the story of three tragic feasts.

(1) *Matthew 14:1-12*.. Herod’s feast when he beheaded John the Baptist

(2) *Esther 7:1-10* Esther’s feast and the hanging of Haman

(3) *Daniel 5* Belshazzar’s feast when he was killed by the Medes and Persians

At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought *it* to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.
Matthew 14:1-12

So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What *is* thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? and it shall be performed, *even* to the half of the kingdom. Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage. Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?

And Esther said, The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath *went* into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther *was*. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

Esther 7:1-10

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished. Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation. Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing: And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: 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 ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

Daniel Chapter 5

IV Belshazzar had prepared a great feast

Verse 1 for a thousand of his lords

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

Daniel 5:1

Verse 3 his princes, his wives, his concubines

Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

Daniel 5:3

Perhaps the hall for that feast was decorated like the garden feast in Esther 1:5-6 “...the garden of the kings palace: where were white, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble, the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble” We can imagine the hall for Belshazzar’s feast was also decorated. It seems to me that these Babylonians, Medes and Persians were more evolved (!) and smarter than men today. We do not know how to decorate!

V Daniel 5:1-4 is best described as an ungodly scene.

Verse 1, drank wine before the 1000 (Proverbs 20:1)

Verse 2 when half-drunk the king commanded to bring the golden vessels that King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple of God at Jerusalem.

Verse 3 When they brought the vessels, they all drank wine out of them to defy the God of Heaven.

Verse 4 they drank , praised and worshipped their god’s.

Rather interesting that the god’s were of the same materials seen in the image of chapter two, and are named in the same order.

Such ungodly behavior has been repeated many time in history.

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

Daniel 5:1-4

VI Daniel 5:5 Sudden intervention from the Hand of God

- 1 Men do not always escape judgment for their sins in this life
Matthew 10:15 Sodom was judged, but still faces judgment
Acts 12:23 Herod was judged, but still faces judgment
Daniel 5:5 Belshazzar was judged but still faces judgment
Jude 7 these are set forth for an example
2Peterr 2:6 an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

Daniel 5:5

- 2 Notice, it was not a hand, but the fingers of a hand
Wrote upon the plaister
The finger was the finger of God Exodus 8:19
- 3 Wrote against *the* candlestick. There was only one light in the place. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.
- 4 What happened in Egypt, to fallen angels, the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Belshazzar are all acts of the finger of God, not His strong arm.
- 5 Belshazzar suddenly faced God but did not realize what was happening.
- 6 The prophet Amos 4:12 “prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.” Why? All are going to meet Him. We need no other reason.

Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, *This is the finger of God:* and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Exodus 8:19

Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: *and* because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

Amos 4:12

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VII Daniel 5:5-8 The effect upon the King

1. The proud king's countenance was changed. In Daniel 3:9 Nebuchadnezzar's was changed because of anger. Beshazzar's because of fear.
- 2 His thoughts troubled him. He was suddenly made sober from his drink
- 3 The joints of his loins were loosed. He became a jelly fish! It was a fulfillment of Isaiah 45:1 written in 712 B.C., a 100 years before.
- 4 His knees smote together. How quickly God can deal with pride.
- 5 The king cried aloud for his wise men
- 6 Their task : "read this writing"
- 7 At that moment the king became very generous with his political promises.
- 8 None could read the writing. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

Daniel 5:5-8

Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

Isaiah 45:1

VIII Daniel 5:9-12 The Queen (mother) comes on the scene.

Verse 10 she came into the banqueting house. She had not been at the party!

His wives and concubines were there, but not his grandmother.

Verse 11 She knew the man named Daniel. Apparently Belshazzar did not.

Had he written him off as just another old man?

Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished. **Verse 10** Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: **Verse 11** There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; **Verse 12** Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

Daniel 5:9-12

I understand that there was no word for 'grandfather. "In similar fashion the Lord Jesus is called 'son of David' and 'son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1) although numerous generations intervened in each case".

Verse 12 reveals that she trusted Daniel. "...he *will* show the interpretation" She did not say he *may*.

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew 1:1

IX Daniel 5:13-16 Daniel is brought before the King.

Verse 13 Belshazzar asks if Daniel was one of the captives brought to Babylon by his grandfather from *Jewry*

Verse 14 he acknowledges that he had heard of Daniel, perhaps from his grandmother.

Verse 15 he requests Daniel to read the writing

Verse 16 the reward. I will make you the *third* ruler...(also verse 7, and verse 29)

History agrees. Belshazzar was only the 'second ruler' at the time because his father was still living.

Verse 13 Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? **Verse 14** I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. **Verse 15** And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing: **Verse 16** And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Daniel 5:13-16

X Daniel 5:17-19 Daniel speaks to the King

Imagine the scene when *old* Daniel walked in to that banqueting hall

Verse 17 Daniel had no interest in Belshazzar's gifts. 'let thy gifts be to thyself and give thy rewards to another'. There comes a time in life for every man when the things of earth lose their value.

Verse 17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. **Verse 18** O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: **Verse 19** And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down **Verse 19** And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.

Verse 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: **Verse 21** And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: 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 ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

Verse 22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; **Verse 23** But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

Daniel 5:17-23

Remember the story of the man lost in the desert, starving with hunger, found a bag of pearls. He threw them down saying "nothing but pearls". He would have given them all for a piece of bread.

Daniel had no doubts. "I will read the writing and make known the interpretation."

Verses 18-21 Daniel begins to speak to the king, but all were listening.

He retold the matter regarding the matter of Belshazzar's grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. The Most High gave him a kingdom, majesty, glory, honor. Your grandfather had great power. "whom he would he slew, whom he would he kept alive."

Verse 20 his heart was lifted up, and his mind *hardened* in pride. And he was disposed from his throne.

Verse 21 he was driven from men—his heart made like a beast, until he knew that the Most High ruled in the kingdom of men

Verse 22 in my opinion, then like Nathan to David, using his finger, pointing at Belshazzar, he said: “and thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart *though thou knewest all this...*” In other words, you have ignored history

The charge could be laid against many a man and woman today. An example. How many do you know who have had godly parents, yet, now live as if God does not exist? . They have left God out of their lives, like the rich man in Luke 12:16-21, whom God called “a fool.”

Verse 23 Thou has lifted up thyself against the God of heaven, bringing the golden vessels of his house and drinking wine in them...praising your gods.

And now Daniel’s greatest charge against this king. “...the God in whose hand thy breath is, (true of us all) in whom we live and move and have our being and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.”

This was also Paul’s charge in Romans 1:21 “... because when they knew God they glorified Him not as God.”

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Luke 12:16-21

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Romans 1:21

XI Daniel 5:24-28 Daniel interprets the writing

God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it.

Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. God keeps books!

Those words could be said of any man. I hear people say, “ we don’t deserve this or that problem.” How foolish. Sinful man only deserves Hell.

Belshazzar heard the words but did not get the message for in verse 29 he planned his life as if it would go on.

Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

Daniel 5:24-28

XII Daniel 5:30-31 That Night. What a Night it was.

Babylon fell into the hands of the Medes and Persians.

Belshazzar was slain. That night God required his soul.

No more chances were given. There was no delay in judgment. There were no further warnings. His cup of iniquity was full. The day of grace for him was suddenly ended.

O that men would heed the warnings of the Bible.

Luke 12:20 who knows when God will say to them “this night thy soul is required. And no man can say “please have me excused”

In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

Daniel 5:30-31