

DISCERNING DANIEL

The Handwriting on the Wall

Text: Daniel 5:18-31

Introduction: Just a quick review to get the setting back in our minds.

Nebuchadnezzar of _____ died in 562 B.C. After six years of different relatives fighting for control, his son Nabonidus became king of the Babylonian _____. Nabonidus appointed his son, Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, as king over the _____ of Babylon.



The _____ historian Herodotus said of the city of Babylon, “It surpasses the splendor of any city of the known world.” With an outer _____ wall over 300 feet high, and a moat around the entire city, those living within felt exceedingly secure. In fact, they were so confident in their self-made safety that King Belshazzar dared to mock the Living Lord of Heaven.

Daniel 5:1-4 1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. 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.

But then as now, God is not _____! The Scripture declared.

Daniel 5:5-6 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.

Of course this pagan king would call his astrologers and soothsayers to explain the message of the writing on the wall. But the _____ these magicians served had no _____ of the things of God and were powerless to tell the meaning of what had happened. But the God who sent the message always has His messenger at

hand, and soon, God's _____ Daniel, the man in whom was the Spirit of _____ God, was summoned to the site of the fatal feast to deliver the Word of the Lord.

Daniel 5:18–19 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.

Daniel called on Belshazzar to remember the _____ of the kingdom of his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. It was, at that point in history, the most _____ empire to ever rule the world. It was an empire that had swallowed whole nations, including _____ and Judah, and its size caused it to encompass multiple _____ groups. But Daniel's primary point was that Nebuchadnezzar ruled over such a majestic kingdom because God _____ it to him. God _____ him to be king. But then Daniel reminded Belshazzar,

Daniel 5:20–21 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.

What was devastating news for Belshazzar should be good news to us who are _____ in 2016 America. God is still on His throne and _____ the universe and the affairs of men. The Holy Spirit stated the principle most clearly in Romans 13:1 ... For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

- Daniel shows us that this is true even when a _____ Nebuchadnezzar rules a brutal empire.
- Paul shows us it is true even when _____ Roman emperors are setting _____ on fire as torches to light their patios.
- We must remember that those who _____ and those who _____ rule over the United States of America will do so only because God _____ them. This truth should move us to our knees to appeal to the God of Heaven to somehow in His power and providence put a man of God or a woman of God in the seat of power in our country and bid them like _____ and Nehemiah to _____ our nation back to faith in God and _____ to His Word.

Daniel continued, **Daniel 5:22–23** 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.

Daniel said, “You could have _____, Belshazzar! You should have _____! You had an _____ right before your eyes! You had opportunity to see the reality of the _____ of God and to know that He puts down the _____. Yet you exalt _____ in that same pride and flaunt your power as lustful sin against the God of Heaven. And you dare to worship gods that are not even _____ that you yourself know were fashioned from some piece of _____ or carved out of wood or _____. Belshazzar, the God who put breath in your lungs can take it away just as quickly because you have refused to honor and _____ Him!

How easy it would be to make application to those who do and who have occupied the halls of power in our own country. Such an application would be appropriate and true. But perhaps the application most needful tonight would not be about others but about _____. How many times?

- Have we looked at our lives, at what we _____, and said, “See what I have done.”?
- Have we praised the gods of _____ and given credit to “a lucky break” instead of giving thanks for a benevolent act of God?
- Have we taken things _____ to the Lord, like _____ and _____, and rather than give them back to God as He had intended, instead use them to provide banquets and _____ for ourselves? How many times?

Daniel 5:24–28 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. 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.”

NUMBERED, NUMBERED - YOUR DAYS ARE NUMBERED!

Not only were Belshazzar’s days numbered, so are _____. God has appointed the _____ of days for each of our lives. Sometimes He will extend them in answer to _____ and for His purposes (as with _____) or will shorten them by the sin unto death to prevent the shaming of the name of Christ (as with _____ and _____). The most important question for us is not, “How _____ days will we have?” but rather “How well have I _____ the days God has appointed for me?”

- If my days ended today, would my life have _____ the Lord?
- If God grants me more days, will I use them for His glory or to glorify _____?

WEIGHED – AND FOUND WANTING

Belshazzar, you have been weighed on God’s scales and the _____ far outweighs the _____! But the same can be said of _____! Me, you! That is the truth of

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

That is why we must have _____! He _____ our sin from the balance by paying the penalty for it through His death on the cross. He also gives us _____ righteousness to be weighed as our own. 2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

PERES – YOUR KINGDOM DIVIDED AMONG THE MEDES AND PERSIANS

Why did Daniel explain the word Peres instead of Upharsin? Peres is the _____. Upharsin is the _____. But Peres, written in the Aramaic would have been PRS, also the word for _____. It was time for the change of world empires which God had announced to King Nebuchadnezzar in his dream of the _____ with a head of gold and arms and chest of silver. The _____ represented Babylon. The _____ represented the Medes and Persians.

Daniel 5: 29-31 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.

Belshazzar obviously thought the fall of his kingdom was still _____, for he appointed Daniel to be the third in power in the city. Belshazzar knew that Babylonia was at war with the Medes, but the armies of Darius had been no _____ to the walled fortress of Babylon. But Belshazzar did not know

- Darius the Mede had enlisted his friend _____ the Persian to assist him.
- Cyrus had set his soldiers digging a new channel to _____ the waters of the Euphrates River, far upstream, out of sight of the Babylonians in the towers.
- Cyrus knew of the drunken banquet planned for the night and divided his army into three parts: One would finish the diversion of the waters, causing the riverbed that flowed through the city to _____. The other two would go to the entrance and exit of the riverbed and the city wall, ready to march in when the waters were down.
- When the Persians advanced up the riverbed, they found the Babylonians had abandoned the _____ to go to the party. They had also left the brass gates that blocked access to the city from the river, _____!
- With little resistance, the soldiers took the city, _____ Belshazzar, and the Empire of Babylonia fell to the Medes and the Persians.

Even more amazing, God foretold it all _____ years in advance through Isaiah.

Isaiah 45:1–4 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.