

Daniel Series- The Writing on the Wall (Belshazzar)

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Lord of Hope Ministries International
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Prelude: WCCC Studio Band Music Track 2 "All the power you need"

Welcome:

I-Worship:

Better Than Life
Jesus You Are

Opening prayer:

Message:

Hello friends, do you notice that people who have never read the Bible describe impending doom as the handwriting on the wall? The phrase originates in the Book of Daniel. Today we will examine an event where God once more made His sovereignty known.

God did this to a king who thought he was invincible. You will learn today that this king did not last long after he saw the writing on the wall. Let us now prepare ourselves to learn this lesson from the bible book of Daniel. Please turn in your bibles to Daniel chapter 5. Hold it there for we will come back to it during today's message.

Babylonian kings had lives that have been dramatically changed by God. For example, Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his own son. His son's name was the unlikely name of Evil-Merodach. You can read all about him in 2 Kings 25. Evil-Merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, was murdered in the year 560 in the month of August. He was murdered by Neriglissar. Neriglissar was the son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar, which makes him the brother-in-law of the man he murdered, Evil-Merodach.

Now in addition to that, not only was he murdered, but his young son a fellow by the name of Labishi-Marduk only reigned for two months. In reigning for two months the months of May and June of 556 BC, he was assassinated. He was then succeeded by a fellow by the name of Nabonidus. Nabonidus then reigned for 17 years.

Nabonidus didn't like living in Babylon, the capital of the empire of Babylonia, so he only was there for about 10 of the 17 years that he reigned. He put his son in as co-regent of that part of the world. His son then, a fellow by the name of Belshazzar, is called king in 5:1, because Belshazzar is the co-regent of his father, Nabonidus.

So who was Belshazzar?

Belshazzar was a Babylonian king who mocks God by throwing a party with articles taken from the Jewish temple. As a result, God passes judgment on Belshazzar by taking away his kingdom and dividing it between the Medes and Persians.

Side note: During the Persian Gulf War one of the goals of the Iraqi army was to protect Babylon, because the insane Saddam Hussein felt that at some point he might even revitalize the city of Babylon. The army of the Iraqis is today what the army of Belshazzar was in those days. Iraq today was Babylon in those days.

So here we have the king of Babylon (or the king of Iraq today) and he is living in his great city of Babylon. In that city, archaeologists have discovered a huge hall, 55 feet and 165 feet long, sufficient enough to hold the number of individuals who would be at a banquet like this. So when it says there were a thousand nobles gathered together at this banquet, there were a thousand nobles gathered together at this banquet contrary to what some people tried to say before the discovery.



Rembrandt's depiction of the biblical account of Belshazzar seeing "the writing on the wall"

Belshazzar (or *Baltasar*, Akkadian *Bel-sarra-usur*) was a prince of Babylon, the son of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon. In the *Book of Daniel* (chapters 5 and 8) of the Jewish Tanakh or Christian Old Testament. Belshazzar is the King of Babylon before the advent of the Medes and Persians.

Contemporary Babylonian sources

Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, who after ruling only three years, went to the oasis of Tayma and devoted himself to the worship of the moon god, Sin. He made Belshazzar co-regent in 553 B.C., leaving him in charge of Babylon's defense.

In the year 540 B.C. Nabonidus returned from Tayma, hoping to defend his kingdom from the Persians who were planning to advance on Babylon. In 539 B.C. Belshazzar was positioned in the city of Babylon to hold the capital, while Nabonidus, marched his troops north to meet Cyrus. On October 10, 539 B.C. Nabonidus surrendered and fled from Cyrus. Two days later, October 12, 539 B.C., the Persian armies overthrew the city of Babylon.

Daniel 5:1-4 calls Nebuchadnezzar the *father* of Belshazzar. The same claim is made in the deuterocanonical Book of Baruch, which most scholars believe to have been written around the same time, in the second century BC. This is not a problem... Some Biblical commentators argue that the statement can be reconciled with extra-Biblical sources by interpreting the term to mean *forefather* or *predecessor*. (The Hebrew word for father *av* is commonly used in the sense of *forefather*.)

"But you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. 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. Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.

"This is the inscription that was written:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN

"This is what these words mean:

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

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

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

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.

That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

For those of you in attendance I want to reinforce what we just read so take a look at this short video.

Video: Daniel - The Writing on the Wall.mpg

Noticed that God says, "You have been found wanting and weighed in the balances. Friends, no one is so powerful that exceeds the grip of God, heaven rules." God can bring down a kingdom in one night. He can bring down a powerful person in one night as well. We must submit ourselves to the glory and the grandeur of heaven, because we know that God is in charge. Everything that God wants to happen will happen. There is just no way that Satan can keep God from ruling this world, because heaven rules.

Pastoral Commentary:

Conclusion:

Is the hand writing on the wall example speaking to you? Are you coloring outside the lines these days? Repent! Stop the insanity... God's judgment is a righteous judgment so your sin will be exposed some day. God see all things... Knows all things...

We are judged by God in order to chastise or to correct us. Men like Belshazzar are often judged in order to punish them. Are you a modern day Belshazzar? Do you know someone who is like him? It is time to change... Will you take a step towards change today?

Remember when we see our own rulers and leaders acting with the same kind of pride and power Belshazzar had we should we pray for God's mercy... We are to love those who appear to be our enemies. But we must never forget that God carries a big stick, and He carries that big stick for a reason. Correction is imminent whether in this life or in the future judgment.

So you have been taught from the word of God. We will continue our journey through the bible in future services. May you remember something that was said today and increase your knowledge of the bible, the only book that God wrote for mankind.

Let's stand for closing prayer.

Postlude:

WCCC Studio Band Live CD Track 4 "I Love you so much"

Resources:

Bible

<http://www.backtothebible.org/index.php/Back-to-the-Bible-Radio-Program/The-Handwriting-On-The-Wall.html>