

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

## BOOK OF DANIEL

### THE EVIL FEAST (DANIEL 5:1-4) 25 YEARS HAVE PASSED

Chap. 5 happens roughly 25 years after chapter 4, so Nebuchadnezzar's grandson Belshazzar was temporarily in power and Daniel would have been in retirement

- Neby had died in 562 B.C. and King Nabonidus (Neby's son) had taken over but was away fighting the Persians

### NABONIDUS HAD ALREADY BEEN CAPTURED

The king of Babylon had been captured and the Medes and Persians had already surrounded Babylon and taken the suburbs

- Why amidst such turbulence did the interim king, Belshazzar throw a party? Some say it was a ceremony to invoke the gods, pure carelessness, and others think it was a false sense of security

### MOST LIKELY, OPTION #2 AND #3

There was a philosophy of carelessness and foolishness that Isaiah 22:13 and 1Cor.15:32 warns us about, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

- This philosophy makes sense to the narcissist or fatalist that has no hope or concern of a resurrection and an eternity based on our decisions

### THIS WAS NOT A PROPER BANQUET

This wasn't a refined banquet, but more of an orgy. People gorged themselves, drank until they couldn't stand, and had open sexual encounters.

- "1000 nobles" sat in this banquet hall as Belshazzar sat at separate table, which was the custom of the day

### THE LEADER SETS THE PACE

Oriental custom called for the king to sit at a separate table, in view, to set the attitude, atmosphere, and tempo of the party. All involved would feel free to follow, and make it a point to do so

- **Leaders are responsible for more than just themselves.** As Believers, **we set the atmosphere** as much as possible

### INTOXICATION, ORGY, NOW BLASPHEMY

Using the sacred vessels of God in their party was offensive, something that Neby, even at his wildest, would not have done

- Belshazzar wouldn't have done this either if he weren't "under the influence." This would have been the equivalent of breaking into a church, stealing communion ware and partying with it

### THE BLASPHEMY WAS INTENTIONAL

We would be wrong to think Belshazzar was just stupid and careless (which he was). No Babylonian party was secular, so Babylonian gods would've been the focus of the party. This made using the vessels of the Jews much more offensive

### THE MAGNITUDE OF THE WORD OF GOD

As Belshazzar arrogantly partied with the sacred vessels of God, the words of the prophet Jeremiah were coming true.

- Jeremiah 50:3 says Babylon would be attacked by a nation from the north, and almost all of chapters 50-51 give remarkable details of the event. Jeremiah was written a generation earlier.

### IDOLATRY VS. IDEA-OLATRY

The Babylonians worshiped gods made from gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which is almost unheard of in our culture. **We tend to worship false ideas and the god we create** in our minds more than idols made of tangible materials

### MAKING GOD IN OUR IMAGE

Many want a dethroned Jesus stripped of His deity, but still a good guy, and a mystical emasculated God whose record of OT events is nothing more than a collection of interesting stories.

- We often forget that God doesn't conform to us, but we're made in His image (Genesis 1:27)

### THE WRITING ON THE WALL (DANIEL 5:5-9)

#### A GOOD SIZED BANQUET HALL

Archeologists uncovered a room 56 ft. wide and 173 ft. long in Nebuchadnezzar's palace in the early 20th Century that could have been this hall. In the center of the long wall, there was a wall covered with a white plaster and had a large chandelier that illuminated it

#### GOD IS A FAN OF POWERPOINT

God teaches object lessons, and here we see a canvas, or screen, that perfectly sets up a vivid presentation. 25 years prior God humbled Neby while he was speaking alone, now He would humble Belshazzar in plain view

- Shock often produces sobriety, and now the interim king would be rocked

#### "THE WRITING ON THE WALL"

This phrase has become a term often used in modern culture to indicate a negative or dramatic event is about to take place

- Daniel gives us detail about the fear of the spectators as the drunken laughter is stopped by the interruption of God. The king "turned pale" and "his knees knocked"

### SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE

Even though 25 years had passed and many things had changed, the Chaldeans were still assembled ready for the king.

- Belshazzar didn't invoke fear, but offered them generous rewards if they can read the writing on the wall, and tell him what it means.

### THE REWARDS WERE SIGNIFICANT

The purple robe symbolize royalty and power in Babylon, and the golden chains represent high office in government. The interpreter will also be 3rd in power in Babylon. This is the best Belshazzar can do considering he is 2nd after his father.

### IT DOESN'T SHOCK US THAT THE CHALDEANS FAILED AGAIN

What is odd is the writing on the wall was in a language they could read, Aramaic.

- Some believe the letters were written vertical and unusually shaped. More than likely, they were legible, but the meaning was not understood.

### HE BECAME EVEN MORE TERRIFIED

Sometimes knowing the bad is better than not knowing at all, and we see this as Belshazzar must wait for an interpretation.

- We haven't seen Daniel because he was in retirement and had lost favor in Babylon. He was Neby's go to man, not Nabonidus', but he was still ready for whatever God called him to do.

### THE CALL OF THE KING

As Believers, we must understand that this life is short, and its purpose is to serve God and honor His Kingdom until we inherit it. Time is never static to servants of the true King.

### THE OLD PROPHET (DANIEL 5:10-16)

#### ENTER THE QUEEN

This is more than likely the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar and the wife of Nabonidus. Nitocris is known historically as an ambitious and intelligent queen.

- She comforts Belshazzar by telling him to remain calm because she remembered her father had a wise man named Daniel that could help.

### ODD SHE REFERRED TO HIM AS DANIEL

Though we don't know why she used his Hebrew name, it is clear that he had quite a reputation with the previous generation.

- She said he had "an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and perception, and the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems"

### BELSHAZZAR WAS UNFAMILIAR WITH DANIEL

In his ignorance, he refers to Daniel as "one of the Judean exiles" not as a former councilman of the king and interim leader himself

- Nevertheless, Belshazzar did recognize that in this aging prophet (in his 80s) he had insight, intelligence, and great wisdom

### THE KING PAINTED THE PICTURE

Belshazzar explains the incident with the hand, and offers Daniel the same rewards he offered the wise men if he can give the interpretation of the writing on the wall.

- Daniel would have never been considered if he hadn't displayed **consistency and integrity** with the pagan leaders in the past

### HOW IS CHARACTER DEFINED?

- Integrity over time (consistency)
- How we live when no one sees us
- Our work ethic in this kingdom, and for the Eternal Kingdom
- When difficult times arise, there is an unexpressed law by which people somehow take their rightful places.
- **It is in crisis that the men and women who hold the keys of the Kingdom stand up, cry out to God, and by God's grace, take charge of the environment around them.**