

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

BOOK OF DANIEL

A REVIEW OF HISTORY (DANIEL 5:17-21) GETTING SASSY?

Some believe Daniel showed contempt for Belshazzar since he didn't use a formal introduction or accept the king's rewards

- He was probably direct because of time, and denied the gifts to make it clear of any inappropriate motives for what he was about to say. Soon, the rewards wouldn't be worth much anyway.

DANIEL AND NEBUCHADNEZZAR WERE TIGHT

Daniel wanted Belshazzar to know how close he and Neby were, and to allude to the degradation of leadership since Neby died

- He also wanted to contrast the earthly power of Neby with the heavenly power of God. Daniel's brief lesson will explain the main reason why Babylon would soon be judged.

THE IRONY

Remember this scene? There are roughly a thousand drunk, hedonistic leaders that would now be forced to end their night (and likely their lives) with a sermon from a prophet

- This foreshadows two NT biblical truths
- 1. **All have an opportunity to respond to truth**
- 2. **All will bow to the power of God, voluntarily or involuntarily**

HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR SIN

In preparation for identifying Belshazzar's sin, Daniel reviewed the sins of Neby—his heart became arrogant and he was prideful

- The benevolence God had shown to Neby made him responsible for how he handled them, but his **failure to be righteous and reasonable brought judgment** to him

THE THESIS RESTATED

v21 repeats, yet again, the main point of Daniel; the sovereignty of God. We must be reminded that we are responsible for our actions, but also that God foreknows our decisions, therefore He has our destinies in His hands.

HUMILITY (DANIEL 5:22-24)

THE SERMON BEGINS

Daniel is upfront about Belshazzar's sin, irresponsibility, and denial of the truth

- **Sin must be addressed because it puts enmity between us and God and leads to destruction, both here and in eternity.** The only way to resolve this is through our **repentance and His forgiveness**

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Belshazzar had to own up to his own choices to be arrogant, gluttonous, drunk, blasphemous, and idolatrous. He could not blame his family or circumstances

- Ezekiel 18:20 mentions "The person who sins is the one who will die. A son won't suffer punishment for the father's iniquity." **Our circumstances are not an excuse.**

OTHERS ARE AFFECTED THOUGH

Our sins cannot impede other's salvation, but our pride, carelessness, and negligence can seriously hurt others spiritually, emotionally, and even physically.

- We also learn that Belshazzar's sin was more severe because he did have Neby's story to set an **example of how to turn to God, but he refused to do so**

WHAT ABOUT US?

Daniel assures Belshazzar that judgment is coming because he had an example and many opportunities to acknowledge the God that "holds your life-breath"

- **Look at the opportunities we have all had to recognize God.** Even the most dysfunctional situations have grace in them, but **do we see it?**

THEREFORE...

v24 stands by itself, but it reminds us of the **conditional promise of God that if we call on His name then He will save us** (2 Chronicles 7:14, Romans 10:13), **but if we do not, there is a penalty for our refusal**

- Though several hours had passed in the banquet hall, more than likely fear paralyzed anyone from leaving

THE GREAT SIN OF PRIDE

A lack of humility was literally the catalyst of all evil (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28). When we are arrogant and prideful, we are acting contradictory to God, and all sin ultimately arises from the bedrock of conceit and self-advancement

LACKING (DANIEL 5:25-31)

THE INSCRIPTION ON THE WALL

The words that appeared on the wall were more than likely Aramaic or Cuneiform (an ancient script that included vowels). The letters would have been written backwards to us, and translated into English would have read – **SRP LQT NM NM**

- When the vowels are added we get **mene, mene, tekel, parsin**

MENE MENE TEKEL PARSIN

The revelation of what this meant was divine, and could not have been deciphered by any scholars then or now

- The phrase alludes to the use of a scale for dividing shekels and determining value
- A simple translation is "**numbered, numbered, weighed, and divided**"

MENE MENE

God told Belshazzar his days of ruling had been numbered and measured and his time was over. This is a reminder that we all have limited time to steward the gifts of God, and that we will have to account for our time.

TEKEL

Belshazzar had been evaluated by God's standard, and was found wanting and deficient

- **We determine right from wrong (righteousness) based on God's standard, not our own. That is called self-righteousness and it always leads to hypocrisy**

PARSIN (OR PERES)

This means "divided" and confirms what Daniel had prophesied through Neby's dream decades before— the Babylonian Empire was to be conquered and divided by the Medes and Persians

- Even as Daniel was speaking, this was being fulfilled as the Persians were flooding into Babylon

WHY PUT UP A FUSS?

After the interpretation, Belshazzar was faithful with his promise and awarded Daniel with the gold chain, purple robe, and high ranking

- Why did Daniel take the gifts that he said he wouldn't, probably because he knew it was all in vain because the kingdom was under siege

THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE ENDED THAT NIGHT

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 3:17 that God will destroy those that desecrate the temple, a reference to the human body.

- Belshazzar not only blasphemed with the vessels of God, but he and his contemporaries had dishonored themselves all night, and more than likely for years/decades

PROPHECY BECOMES HISTORY

While Nabonidus was held captive, the Medes and Persians diverted the water of the Euphrates enabling them to lift the sluice gates of Babylon, and they quietly slipped in and took the world's strongest city without a fight

THE JUDGMENT OF A NATION

- Chapter 5 closes with the judgment of a nation due to the intentional debauchery and idolatry of a people and its leaders. This shows that whole nations feel God's judgment when the people deny Him.

NATIONS ARE INDIVIDUALS

- There is a judgment on a people that allow, and often praise, sin. But, the correction of a people starts with the correction of the individual.
- **Matthew 7:1-5**