

Daniel 5

"The Handwriting on the Wall"

Part 4

Introduction: Last week in our study of Daniel we stopped in verse 23 and this verse was connected to what Daniel had said to Belshazzar in the previous verses.

Notice Daniel 5:16-22

Belshazzar was fully aware of what God had done in the life of his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. This was the grace of God giving to the king an opportunity to repent and turn to the God of his grandfather. But the king made the choice not to be humbled but to continue in his pride.

Notice Daniel 5:23

In this verse we considered one of the effects of pride in a person's life and that is that pride will keep a person from learning the truth. People can be so set in their ways and prideful as well that when the Truth is presented to them, they will not grasp it nor will they even consider it. I have talked with people who hold tightly to keeping the Law for salvation and they do so because that is what their parents believed. They are proud of the fact that they are following in the same belief, and their pride keeps them from seeing the Truth which is that NO MAN is saved by keeping the Law. Belshazzar was a very prideful man, and his pride kept him from allowing the Truth to change his life.

➤ **Interpreting the Handwriting on the Wall**

Notice Daniel 5:24-26

The first Word of the writing was repeated and there are many thoughts as to why. This Word means "NUMBERED" and the idea behind the it is that Belshazzar's kingdom had been numbered and it was coming to an end. The repetition of MENE could have been a reference also to the life of the king for just as his kingdom would end, so would his life.

Application:

This is a reminder to all of us that every nation and every world power have a time appointed that it will come to an end. Each world kingdom has a purpose in the hands of God, and each one will one day come to an end. Just as the image in Daniel 2 revealed the Babylonian kingdom would be taken over by the Medes and the Persians, they would be

overtaken by Greece, and they would be overtaken by Roman, then would come the revived Roman Empire and the last Kingdom to come to the world will be the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Daniel 2:31-35

³¹ *Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.*

³² *This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,*

³³ *His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.*

³⁴ *Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.*

³⁵ *Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.*

Not only was the kingdom numbered but so was the king's life. He would die the very night of the handwriting. This too is a reminder to all people.

Job 14:1-5

Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

² *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

³ *And doth thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?*

⁴ *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*

⁵ *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;*

There is appointed to each of us a day to die. Our days are numbered and the boundary is set. We cannot go beyond the boundary that has been established. Belshazzar was living his last day, and he did not know it.

Notice Daniel 5:27

The next part of the message was that Belshazzar had been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Let us notice some extrabiblical writing to see what the king was like.

Xenophon relates two different incidents illustrating the vanity and cruelty of Belshazzar.

And when my boy went hunting with [Belshazzar] as his friend, and when a bear came out, they both gave chase and the present ruler [Belshazzar] let fly his javelin but missed. . . . Then my son threw . . . and brought down the bear. And then that man was vexed, to be sure, as it proved, but covered his jealousy in darkness. But when again a lion appeared, he missed again. . . . but again a second time my son hit his mark and killed the lion and cried, 'Have I not thrown twice in succession and brought an animal down each time!' Then that villain no longer restrained his jealous wrath but, snatching a spear from one of the attendants, smote him in the breast—my son, my only, well-loved son—and took away his life. . . . If, therefore, you [Cyrus] will receive me and I may find some hope of getting with your help some vengeance for my dear son, I think that I should find my youth again . . ."

At a royal banquet, Belshazzar castrated a man named **Gadatas**, merely because his concubine found the man attractive:

"But, Gobryas," said Cyrus, when he heard this, "do you not accuse this young fellow who has just come to the throne [Belshazzar] of cruel insolence of character?"

"That judgment, I think," said Gobryas, "is warranted by my experience with him. . . . For once when he and the son of a man much more powerful than I were drinking together, a young man [Gadatas] who, like my son, was his comrade, he had him seized and castrated; and the occasion, so some people said, was simply because his concubine had praised his friend, remarking how handsome he was and felicitating the woman who should be his wife; but the king himself now maintains that it was because the man had made advances toward his concubine. . . ."

The king was a cruel man, and the day of judgment was upon him.

Application:

This is a Truth that the unsaved world needs to hear. They too are headed for a judgment and on that day, they will stand before Jesus Christ and discover that they are spiritually bankrupt. God has weighed their actions and they will be judged.

1 Samuel 2:2-4

² *There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.*

³ *Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.*

⁴ *The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.*

Proverbs 16:2

² *All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.*

The Bible tells of the coming Judgment upon all men.

Hebrews 9:27

²⁷ *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

Romans 2:16

¹⁶ *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*

We read about the believer's judgment on Revelation 20.

Revelation 20:11-15

¹¹ *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

¹² *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

¹³ *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

¹⁴ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

These people will be judged out of what is written in the books. Their judgment will be based on their sin committed and on the Truth they knew.

Hebrews 8:12

¹² For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

The believer's sins are all forgotten. But the unbeliever's sins are all recorded in the books.

Luke 12:47-48

⁴⁷ And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

⁴⁸ But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

In heaven there are different degrees of rewards. In the Lake of Fire there will be different degrees of suffering and much of that will be determined by the amount of Truth the person was exposed to. The man or woman who sat in church for years and heard the Gospel but was never saved will be given a greater degree of suffering based upon what Jesus said in Luke 12.

For we who are believers our judgment will be in heaven and the Judgment Seat of Christ. We will not be judged for sin, but our works will be judged.

2 Corinthians 5:10

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15

¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Let us get back to Daniel.

Notice Daniel 5:28

The kingdom of Belshazzar would be divided between the Medes and the Persians.

Notice Daniel 5:29-31

That night the king died. He gave Daniel the rewards, which tells us he was not expecting this to happen. I find it very sad that we read of no repentance at all from the king.

Conclusion:

There was a man under the leadership of Darius by the name of Cyrus. This overthrow of Babylon was all in the plan of God.

Isaiah 44:28, 45:1-4

²⁸ That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

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;

² I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

³ And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

⁴ For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

Isaiah wrote of Cyrus about 150 years before the fall of Babylon. I show you this just as a reminder of the accuracy of the Word of God.