

- I) V1-4 INTRO: Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords
- II) The events Ch 5 take place around 23 years after the close of chapter 4
- III) Almost 70 years have transpired since Daniel originally came to Babylon (539 BC)
  - Daniel is now an old man, somewhere between 85 and 90 years of age
  - King Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC and now Belshazzar rules Babylon
- IV) Who is Belshazzar and how did he come to reign over Babylon?
  - This is where historical scholarship comes to our aid!
  - Nebuchadnezzar died shortly after fortifying Babylon. His son Evil Merodach ruled for two years and then was assassinated by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar. Neriglissar ruled for four years and died. At his death his son Labash-shar-achod began to rule, but because he was a mentally diminished child, he only ruled for 9 months and ultimately was beaten to death. The conspirators then appointed Nabonidus to reign, and he reigned for 17 years before being defeated in battle by Cyrus the Persian and was exiled from Babylon
- V) Nabonidus married either the wife, or the daughter, of Nebuchadnezzar
  - He assumed the throne in 556 BC and ruled until his defeat by Cyrus (539 BC)
  - Belshazzar was his son and was ruling as a co regent at this time
- VI) Many years before, Daniel had interpreted a dream for Nebuchadnezzar
  - He had stated that an inferior kingdom would arise after Babylon
  - Dan 2:39 After you shall arise another kingdom *inferior* to yours
- VII) In this chapter, this prophecy is fulfilled as we see the fall of Babylon
- VIII) Various portions in scripture prophesy its fall (Jer 50:23-25, Jer 51:54-58)
  - Is 13:17-18 Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, Who will not regard silver; And as for gold, they will not delight in it. Also, their bows will dash the young men to pieces, and they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye will not spare children
- IX) Belshazzar made a great feast for a 1000 of his lords
  - He threw the party even though the Medes and Persians were overrunning his country
- X) This is because he had a false security, believing that his fortress was impregnable
  - Babylon was 6 miles square. It had great outer walls of incredible

thickness. The top of the wall was broad enough for 4 chariots to race side by side. It also had a system of inner and outer walls, with a *water moat* separating the walls. The Euphrates River flowed from North to South through its center and was bordered by walls. A bridge connected the Eastern and Western Gates, and a *tunnel* led into the city.

I) Inside the city were provisions that could last for several years: He was secure!

II) The king trusted in the fortress that he was hiding in  
He thought that with all the preparations made for his security that he was safe

III) This obviously proved to be a very foolish thing to trust in  
Ps 20:7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

IV) He was most likely on a platform, drinking toasts to the gods of Babylon  
Under the stimulus of the wine, he made a very rash decision  
Pr 23:31-33 Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. Your eyes will see strange sights, and your mind will imagine confusing things.

V) V2-4 While he tasted the wine Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver  
In Babylon's third invasion, the temple was pillaged the gold was taken  
2 Ki 24:13 As the LORD had declared, Nebuchadnezzar removed the treasures from the temple of the LORD and from the royal palace, and cut up the gold articles that Solomon king of Israel had made for the temple of the LORD.

VI) Nebuchadnezzar respected the God of Israel, and the utensils had been held in storage  
Belshazzar does not regard Israel's God, so he desecrates the holy vessels

VII) V4 They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and  
He was busy praising his gods (descending order representing idolatry)  
While drunk he committed an act of sacrilege, drinking from the sacred vessels

VIII) V5-9 In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote

opposite the

Archaeologists have discovered Nebuchadnezzar's palace  
56' wide, 173' long: Midway in the long wall opposite the entrance was a  
hollowed-out portion where the king would have sat. The wall was covered with white  
plaster

IX) The hall would have been illuminated with candles, torches and oil lamps  
It would have been dimly lit, with smoke in the room  
The king wrote next to a lampstand, so that it was visible for all to see

X) V6-7 His countenance changed, fear gripped him and the joints of his hips  
were loosed  
He lost the strength to stand, becoming faint  
His drunken courage is now gone: He sobered up

I) V7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers the Chaldeans and the  
soothsayers  
He calls out for his religious leaders for help and promised to greatly  
honor them

II) The scarlet clothing and chain of gold were special tokens of honor and  
authority  
Third ruler is the highest office he could offer them: He was under  
Nabonidus  
The King was terrified and his lords were perplexed, having no answer

III) V10 The queen because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the  
banquet  
Who is this woman: Some believe it to be the queen-mother (of  
Belshazzar)

IV) V10 Like any mother, she told him to get it together

V) V11-12 There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God  
She actually uses the words the Nebuchadnezzar used to describe  
Daniel (Dan 4)  
Your father (ancestor) Nebuchadnezzar trusted him and gave him a high  
position

VI) V11 She tells him Light, understanding and wisdom were found in him  
She recognized that Daniel had a special enlightenment

VII) Her counsel: Seek help from this godly man

**This is a key if you want proper direction**

**VIII) The system of the world is not able to give direction for a satisfied life  
We should not seek its wisdom for answers to our questions  
Ps 1:1-3 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the  
ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his  
delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall  
be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season,  
whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper**

**IX) V13-16 Daniel was brought in before the king. And the king spoke and said to  
Daniel**

**X) Under Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel was a man of high authority  
He had been ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief of the  
wise men (2:48)  
He had obviously been demoted or removed when Belshazzar took over**

**XI) Belshazzar obviously knew some of his history, knowing he is Jewish and a  
captive  
When the times got tough, he was willing to hear from this Jewish man**

**XII) V14-15 I've heard of you that the Spirit of God is in you and that light and  
understanding  
I have ignored your existence for some time because you have not been  
worth my time**

**I) My religion has been simply fine with me, but it has left me without an answer  
I haven't been in need before, but now I am: can you help me?**

**II) V16 And I have heard of you that you can give interpretations and explain  
enigmas  
I will even make you a very influential, powerful and rich man!**

**III) V17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king Let your gifts be for  
yourself  
Daniel gives the king a sermon: Probably very upset over the  
desecration of the vessels  
Zeal for the Lord is what provides fuel for such a message**

**IV) Daniel is not a prophet for hire, so any gifts the king offers are not desired  
You can keep your gifts because my interpretation cannot be bought! I  
am not for sale  
1 Th 2:4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the**

**gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.**

**V) V18-19 O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and**

**VI) He instructs him that it is the God of heaven who gave the nation its glory  
Dan 4:17 The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to  
whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men**

**Ro 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God**

**VII) This is balanced out by the fact that we render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that belong to God (Mt 22:21)**

**VIII) When government usurps the place of God, we are to obey God rather than men (Ac 5:29)**

**IX) V20-21 When his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened in pride he was deposed  
Nebuchadnezzar had absolute power, but he also was held accountable by God**

**X) When his heart was lifted up by pride, God brought him low  
Pr 29:23 A man's pride will bring him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor**

**XI) God is greater than any earthly king and this is something Nebuchadnezzar knew**

**XII) V22-23 But you his son Belshazzar have not humbled your heart although you knew all  
Your grandfather was greater than you have ever been yet you are under siege**

**XIII) It is your pride and arrogance that has led to this moment  
You knew how the Lord dealt with your grandfather: Why did you ignore it?**

**I) V22 You have not humbled your heart although you knew all this  
You have no excuse: you are completely aware of what happened in the past**

**II) Your grandfather learned a valuable lesson and it completely changed his life  
Dan 4:35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.**

**No one can restrain His hand or say to Him What have You done?**

**III) You knew all of this and yet here you are drinking and acting arrogantly  
You knew that Nebuchadnezzar had been humbled, but you refused to  
be**

**IV) V23 And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have  
brought the**

**V) You took the vessels of the Temple and used them for goblets as you got  
drunk  
Instead of being aware of the terrible situation, in pride you acted the  
fool before men**

**VI) You have praised your idols and rejected the God of the universe in your pride  
It is this God who holds your breath in His hand  
It is this God who owns all your ways that you have not glorified**

**VII) We have already seen that Daniel did not mince words as he spoke to  
Belshazzar  
One other thing to consider: he more than likely said this before *all of  
the guests***

**VIII) Daniel did not hold back, even though there were many listening to what he  
said  
He took his very life into his own hands, knowing he could die for  
saying this  
Is 50:7 For the Lord God helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced;  
Therefore, I have set My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.**

**IX) When you know the Lord and believe His word, you act upon it  
It occurs at work, when given opportunity  
It occurs in the home, or neighborhood, or in school, or before mockers**

**X) V24-28 Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him and this writing was  
written  
Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin**

**XI) V29-31 Then Belshazzar gave the command and they clothed Daniel with  
purple and put a  
Disco Daniel: Obviously, all of these honors did not last**

**XII) Daniel did not desire nor seek the honor that came from the king**

His desire was to be honorable before the Lord, and to serve Him faithfully

I) In the NT, this is what believers are encouraged to do

1 Co 9:24-27 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

II) It was over that night: What good is the honor of the world, anyway?

III) V30-31 That very night Belshazzar king of the Chaldeans was slain And Darius the Mede

The Persians stationed military at two ends of the walls, where a river ran through it

They blocked the river until the water level was fordable, and then entered the city

IV) In one night, the city fell and Belshazzar died