

**“FAITH UNDER PRESSURE”  
STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL**

**Daniel 5:1-31**

**“Learn by Example Before the Writing is on the Wall”**

**Introduction:** “The writing is on the wall” is an expression people use to indicate that the end of something is inevitable. Did you know this expression has its origin in Scripture? Today we will explore the transition from the Babylonian Empire to the Media- Persian Empire. Thirty years have passed since the events of Daniel chapter 4 and King Nebuchadnezzar has been dead for 23 years.

**SECTION I: A PREMATURE CELEBRATION BASED ON ARROGANT ASSUMPTION  
(Daniel 5:1-12).**

- A. The Media kingdom has grown powerful and is now ruled by King Cyrus who began conquering the Babylonian Empire. Belshazzar displayed a false sense of security because of the heavy fortifications and abundant provisions. Belshazzar may have been leading a pagan worship service to invoke the favor of his false gods for help in the war.
- B. Belshazzar uses the vessels from the Jerusalem temple to worship false gods. Such vessels are forbidden from common use (1 Corinthians 10:7; 10:14-22). Belshazzar’s feast was an arrogant perversion of worship that profaned the consecrated vessels. Are you honoring God and worshipping in a way that is pleasing to Him according to His word? How serious do you take the worship that you offer to God? Do you love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength? Are you living in obedience and surrender to His will? (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20).
- C. The writing on the wall is a public display of power in front of a crowd of over 1,000 people (Exodus 31:18; John 8:6). Belshazzar calls the wise men, and they can’t interpret the message. People who don’t have the Holy Spirit don’t have access to supernatural insight (Deuteronomy 18:9-11; Acts 16:16). Daniel is described as having the Spirit of the Holy God in him.
- D. The queen is most likely Nitocris, daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, the wife of Nabonidus, and mother of Belshazzar. The term father is sometimes used to describe a grandfather or predecessor. Daniel as opposed to the wise men has an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, problem solving abilities.

**SECTION II: THE TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE THAT ENDED WITH JUDGEMENT  
(Daniel 5:13-24)**

- A. Belshazzar meets Daniel and offers reward for interpretation. Daniel may have lost his position in the court after the death of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel’s snappy response could indicate agitation with the king’s idolatrous use of the holy vessels.
- B. God is the real power behind the throne. God gave Nebuchadnezzar royal authority, greatness, state of high honor and dignity, and majesty (Romans 13). Nebuchadnezzar was judged because his heart was lifted up and his spirit hardened with pride. Belshazzar did not humble his heart and he lifted up himself against God. He desecrated the holy vessels, praised idols, and he did not glorify God. The fingers were sent in response to Belshazzar’s sin.

**SECTION III: WILL YOU BE ABLE TO STAND IN THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT? (Daniel 5:25-31).**

- A. The meaning of the message was secured with spiritual encryption. It could only be decoded by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The literal translation is “mina, mina, shekel, and a half” or “mina, shekel, and two half shekels”. These are referring to units of measurement and money. The spiritual interpretation is “numbered, numbered, weighed, and divided” the verb form of these words.
- B. Mene – numbered, counted; implying a duration of time also unit of weight related to silver or gold. God numbered Belshazzar’s kingdom and finished it. God is in control of the length and duration of kingdoms.
- C. Tekel – to be weighed or to be judged. Belshazzar was weighed in the scales and found wanting. In other words, he came up short. He did not meet God’s standards.
- D. Peres – half shekel – divided. Belshazzar kingdom was divided and given to the Medes and Persians.
- E. Daniel is rewarded. The Persians diverted the river and marched into the city under the wall. They took Babylon without a fight.

**READ PSALM 90:1-12. TOMMOROW IS NOT PROMISED. CHOOSE THE LORD TODAY. KINGDOMS COME AND GO. ADMINISTRATIONS COME AND GO. BUT THE WORD OF GOD LASTS FOREVER. BELSHAZZAR FAILED TO LEARN FROM THE PAST AND SUFFERED THE CONSEQUENCE. WILL YOU LEARN FROM HIS ERROR AND REPENT AND BELIEVE ON CHRIST JESUS?**

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