

Numbered, Weighed and Rejected

Lesson Six: Daniel Five

Introduction:

This chapter is occupied with the closing of the history of the Babylonian Empire. It is a picture of the overthrow of Gentile power, especially as it related to the religious character of “Babylon the Great” as is mentioned in Revelation 16-18.

The fifth chapter records the fall of Babylon and the death of Belshazzar. What comes before us here is the impiety of Gentile power as represented by Belshazzar rising to its full height in the desecration of the sacred vessels. Belshazzar’s most devastating mistake was his arrogant irreverence of God.

Two equally evil kings demonstrate two equally vital messages: God’s pardon for the humble and God’s judgment for the proud.

A TRUTH TO REMEMBER

A. The setting.

1. Let’s glean some background information that will help us better appreciate the biblical record of these events.
2. After Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC, his son Evil-Merodach ruled over Babylon for two years. In 560 BC, he was assassinated. That started a series of rulers ruling for two or three years at a time.
3. Towards the end of Belshazzar’s reign, the Medo-Persian military led by Cyrus, marched toward Babylon. This army was met by Nabonidus and his troops, who suffered defeat and retreated leaving free access to the capital. But Belshazzar did not take the situation seriously. To him, The Medes had won a hollow victory. Little did he realize that despite Babylon’s fortifications, his rule was about to come to an end.

B. Four pictures in Daniel of Gentile world dominion.

1. These four pictures show the course of Gentile world dominion.
2. In chapter two we saw the great image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.
3. In chapter four we saw the vision of Nebuchadnezzar’s tree that covered the earth but was cut down.
4. In this chapter, Belshazzar’s impious feast and the sudden judgment of God upon the nation of Babylon as the Medes and Persians took over.

5. In chapters 7, 8 and 9 we will take up the vision of the four beasts.
 6. These four pictures cover the time from Judah's captivity until the Millennial Kingdom.
- C. **However, Babylon represents more than a physical kingdom.**
- D. **Babylonianism follows the same pattern from kingdom to kingdom.**
1. We can sum up the pattern of anti-Christian Babylonianism under three words: ***federation, desecration, and frustration.***
 2. The first attempt is to set up a worldwide kingdom or ***federation*** under one particular head or nation who will dominate all the governments of the world.
 3. When this has been partly achieved, we find that it results in ***desecration***, a denial of God, a denial of His Word, and a denial of all things that are sacred.
 4. Then as the judgment of God falls upon them, we have the third stage, the ***frustration*** of all man's plans and the fulfillment of the plan of God.
 5. This is illustrated in this fifth chapter of Daniel in the history of Belshazzar.
 6. It is important in studying this passage that we note, the judgment of God fell upon Belshazzar and upon the kingdom of Babylon as a direct result of one act on the part of Belshazzar. *That one act was that reached out and touched the holy things of God.*

A FEAST TO REMEMBER

- A. **The feast is a testimony of Babylonian arrogance.**
- B. **The feast was a drunken party to which Belshazzar had invited a thousand nobles.**
1. When time came for the "***offering of toasts and pouring out of libations to the gods of Babylon***" Belshazzar commanded that "***the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple at Jerusalem***" be brought out and used for the drinking purpose (v.2).
 2. By using these sacred vessels in this way, he was defaming the Lord of Israel and exalting himself above the King of kings.
 3. This was a flourish of irreverence.
- C. **Soon, however, the festive atmosphere of the banquet came to a sudden end.**
1. **The hand of God:** the finger of God that defeated the Egyptians when Pharaoh refused to let His people go (Ex. 8:19); and the finger of God that wrote the holy law for Israel on the tables of stone (Ex 31:18). Jesus said that he casts out demons "by

the finger of God (Luke 11:20). Now the finger of God is writing out His judgment upon the king and his empire.

2. As drunken Belshazzar stared at the wall his ***“face grew pale, and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack, and his knees began knocking together”*** (v 6).

THE FAME OF DANIEL

A. **Two people conspicuously absent.**

B. **Queen Mother recommends Daniel.**

1. Daniel 5:10-12
2. When the occasion is little, one man is as good as another. When it is crucial you need a man of God.

C. **Before Daniel revealed the message that was on the wall, he reviewed some history.**

1. He reminded Belshazzar of the history of his Nebuchadnezzar and his pride.
2. He did this to make it clear to the king that God is the supreme power above all earthly rulers.
3. Now Belshazzar had fallen into the same prideful self-importance.
4. The logical conclusion was if God had judged his predecessor, why would He allow Belshazzar's sin to go unpunished? (v.22)
5. That logic still applies today.
6. History is a great teacher, but Belshazzar was a poor student.
7. *This was not a case of ignorance. It was arrogant defiance. It matters what we know, and it matters how we respond.*
8. **Unmindful of the lessons of the past. Unintelligent when it comes to interpreting the present. Totally unprepared for that which lies in the future consequences.** Hebrews 10:29
9. Daniel charges Belshazzar with three things:
 - Blasphemy
 - Dishonoring and demeaning the God of heaven
 - Worshipping idols with things sacred to God

THE REVELATION

A. Three Aramaic words. Daniel 5:25-26

1. Mene: measured, counted and scrutinized.
2. Tekel: weighed according to God's standard.
3. Upharsin: divided or halved.

B. On the night of October 11, 539 BC, the Medo-Persian army slipped beneath the wall of Babylon and put Belshazzar to death.

LESSONS:

- A. God's judgment may be slow, but they are thorough.
- B. Never underestimate the power of a godly life.
- C. This chapter prefigures the overthrow of all Gentile power and dominion in the time of the end, and especially of that evil system designated in the book of Revelation. (Rev. 17:5)
- D. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 tells us about the disaster of the world when Jesus returns. It does not have to overtake the child of God. Isaiah 40:23-24
- E. In the first chapter of Genesis, God created a division between light and darkness. The devil has been busy ever since to mix them together. The man of God is called to walk apart from the darkness as a child of light and of the day. May it ever be so with us.